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EDITED BY LLOYD C. SANDERS.

H.R.H. THE PRINCE CONSORT.

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LIFE OF H.R.H. 52768

THE PRINCE CONSORT.

BY

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS is an endeavour at a summary of the events of a life and the developments of a character which have had no small influence upon our century. Sir Theodore Martin's Life is fuller in detail than is possible where the view is of the individual chiefly as a statesman; but other memoirs have since come to light, more especially those of the Duke of Coburg, giving fresh facts and opinions illustrating the Prince's disposition, and therefore valuable. It has been my attempt to put these together, taking for granted a knowledge on the reader's part of contemporary events and personages, and only endeavouring to show how they affected the subject of this biography, and how they were dealt with by him.

The authorities that have been consulted for the purposes of this sketch are :—

Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince Consort;* Grey's *Early Years of the Prince Consort; The Queen's Journal in the Highlands; Charles Greville's Memoirs; Lady Blomfield's Memoirs;* Lord Dalling's *Life of Lord Palmerston; Letters of Lord Beaconsfield;* Kinglake's *Crimean War; Count Vizthum's Memoirs; Life of Bishop Samuel Wilberforce;* the Duke of Coburg's *Aus Meinen Leben;* Irving's *Annals of our Time.*

C. M. YONGE.

LIFE OF

H.R.H.

ALBERT, PRINCE CONSORT OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD.

1819–1835.

Consorts to female Sovereigns — The Saxe family—The first and second Electors—Ernest and Albert—The lines of Saxony and Coburg—Prince Leopold—Marriages of the Dukes of Clarence and Kent—Birth of Ernest and Albert—Their mother and father —Boyhood in the open air—Education—Death of their mother and grandmother—Visit to Belgium—The Duke's second marriage—Practical jokes—Amusements—Confirmation — Visits to Schwerin, Berlin and Vienna.

He, whose life is here sketched, stood in a remarkable, almost an unique position, as a Statesman: holding no nominal office, and yet being the guiding and influencing spirit, in fact, the Queen's *alter ego*, but so unobtrusively that it was only the loss that made the fact evident; and of him most truly it might be said, that when a man is missed then he is mourned.

Queens regnant in the ruder ages were usually married to the man preferred as their protector by the

family or the nation, and he usually became actually king in title and in power, while they sank into mere consorts. Here and there some Semiramis might assert herself, but it was not till the times of more enlightened education that a queen could, as a rule, be regarded as a substantial power; the supremacy of the husband was felt to be mischievous in the case of the Maries of England and Scotland, whose marriages might well make the two queens, Elizabeth of England and Christina of Sweden, shrink from wedlock. William of Orange reigned by the will of the people; but Anne's husband became almost a proverbial nonentity; and, in spite of the title of Emperor, and of his wife's ardent affection, Maria Theresa's Francis was of little more importance than George of Denmark. It was reserved for Albert of Saxe-Coburg to show what was the ideal of a consort to a female sovereign.

The Sachs, or Saxe family, with their simple shield and noble motto, "*Treu und Fest*," were descended from one of the most ancient stocks in Germany. Like the House of Brunswick, they numbered among their forefathers the original Welf, or Guelf, whose name became the designation of the Papal in distinction to the Secular party in Germany. Some of the greatest emperors had been of their line, before the Electors had invariably elected members of the House of Hapsburg to the Empire of Germany.

By marriage with heiresses, the beautiful mountainous lands of Thuringen, or Thuringia, and of Coburg, were acquired by the Counts of Saxony, and Frederick, the first Elector, was a man of mark.

The second Elector, Frederick the Mild, who reigned from 1428 to 1464, was father to the boys who were the subject of the famous outrage called the *Prinzen-raub.* He had offended a famous robber, Konrad of Kaufungen, by refusing to repay the sum given for ransom from captivity incurred in his service. Konrad threatened vengeance, but the Elector coolly answered: "It is hard to burn the fish in the lake."

Konrad (or Kunz), bribed the scullion of the Castle of Altenburg, to open for him the window over a steep precipice, and by means of ladders, climbed at night into the castle, and stole the two children of the Elector through the window of their chamber, before the eyes of their mother, whom he had bolted into her own apartment. He was somewhat delayed in riding off with his troop, by having at first taken a boy who was sleeping in the same room instead of Albert, the younger brother, and thus was some distance in the rear of the main body. At daybreak, being not far from his own castle, he suffered the boy to dismount and gather some wild strawberries. On the approach of a stout charcoal-burner, Albert cried out for help, and the man called his comrades to come

to the rescue with their huge staves, so that the robber was captured, and thus young Albert was saved and brought back to his parents. The elder brother, Ernest, was restored a week later, and a little chapel marks the spot of Albert's rescue.

These two brothers became the parents of the lines of Saxony and Coburg. Ernest's eldest son was Frederick the Wise, the admirable Elector who protected Luther, and whose heart was broken by disappointed hope of a true reformation. His nephew, John Frederick, was deprived of the electorate and dukedom by Charles V., for his share in the Lutheran rebellion, and these were transferred to the grandson of Albert. This younger line has been singularly half-hearted and unfortunate, alike in the Thirty Years' War and the Napoleonic struggle.

The elder, Ernestine branch, retained Coburg and its dependencies, and gave one of the chief heroes to the Thirty Years' War, Bernard, the champion of Elizabeth of Bohemia. Subdivisions among the numerous families broke up the possessions, and intermarriages reunited them, in a manner bewildering to any save the compilers of the *Almanacs de Gotha.*

At the close of the War of Liberation, the family of Saxe-Coburg Saalfeld consisted of three brothers, Ernest, Ferdinand, and Leopold; and four sisters, Julia, Sophia, Antoinette, and Victoria. The whole family were able

and intelligent, and held advanced opinions, in contrast to those of most of the German princes, who had been terrified into absolutism by the Great Revolution, and almost compelled by poverty to become exacting. The Duke was, in fact, the first German prince who gave his subjects a liberal constitution.

The three brothers were all married about the same time, in the years 1816 and 1817—Duke Ernest to Louisa of Saxe-Gotha Altenburg, Prince Ferdinand to the Hungarian Princess Kohary, and Prince Leopold to our English Charlotte.

Golden opinions were won in England by Leopold during that fleeting year of bliss which ensued to crown the poor Princess's hitherto sad and stormy life. Probably the early death, that seems so piteous and was so deeply lamented, was the greatest blessing that could have befallen one in whom the hereditary insanity of the House of Brunswick was only too likely to have been renewed; but in the universal sympathy and pity the connection she had formed led to further results.

The hitherto unwedded members of the English Royal Family were called on to marry and provide heirs to the Crown, and the third and fourth sons of George III. both chose members of the great Sachsen House; the Duke of Clarence marrying Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, and the Duke of Kent Prince Leopold's youngest sister, Victoria, already the

widow of the Prince of Leiningen and mother of two children. He had already shown a desire for this union, but the Princess, being guardian to her children, there had been difficulties in the way.

The second son of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, Francis Charles ALBERT Augustus Emmanuel, and his sister's daughter, Alexandrina Victoria of Kent, were born in the same year, with three months between them, the former being born at Rosenau on August the 19th, the latter on May the 24th, so that she was slightly the elder.

Ernest, the eldest son, and at present the reigning Duke, to whose memoirs much is owing in this narrative, preceded his brother by fourteen months. Their names went back to the old times when the lines parted. He says:—

"In our inmost family circle, the fact that I and my younger brother have the same names as the stolen sons of Frederick the Mild, gave material for many memories to our grandparents and relatives, and many kind hopes for our future.

"The charcoal-burner, George Schmidt, the Abbot Coborius, the seizure by the Knight Kunz and his servant Schweinitz, the danger of Prince Ernest in the Teufelskluft, the generous woodcutter of the forest, the excellent Captain Frederic of Schänberg, and finally, the punishment and death of the robber—the whole, oft-repeated history became an inexhaustible source of interest alike to the children and to the narrators."

The two boys were both handsome, the younger with a delicate, feminine beauty, "like a little angel with his fair curls," as he is described. He was like his

mother, and her especial darling, to such a degree that she was fast spoiling him; while his nurse, when he was but three, had talked to him of his being the husband of the future Queen of England.

Such influences were seen by the father to be perilous to his sons' characters, and when they were only five and four years old, he took them entirely out of the nursery and from feminine attendance, and placed them under a tutor, Herr Florschutz. Their mother, the Duchess Louisa, naturally resented this, and there were other differences caused by her wayward and uncertain temper, which resulted in a separation and her retirement to Wendel. She was the daughter of the last but one of the line of Saxe-Gotha Altenburg, and on the death of her uncle, Gotha passed to Duke Ernest, Saalfeld being resigned to the Duke of Meiningen.

The boys were, however, still the darlings of a grandmother, and a step-grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, who must have been a woman of great ability and good sense, and the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha Altenburg, step-mother to poor Duchess Louisa, both of whom were devoted to the two children, and were sensible women. The little grandsons visited their own grandmother daily, and were regaled with stories from the Waverley novels.

It is, however, on their father that Duke Ernest dwells the most:—

"After the separation from our mother, he took an especially deep and constant part in every detail of our education and instruction. We were in daily, and almost exclusive intercourse with him, in a beautiful connection between father and sons not easily to be paralleled, and he was one of those personalities which, without didactic maxims, impress themselves by their very existence upon young people. My father united to unusual external beauty an excellent understanding and judgment, and a deep, thoughtful spirit. Even if he had not been born in an age when the training of young princes has become conducted on principle, he would have unfolded a far greater importance in it than had been possible in former circumstances. It cannot be said that he had himself mastered much learning, for in those times Universities were not visited by princes, and the tutors in the little Courts were of very moderate quality. Yet my father was at home in many departments of knowledge, and had formed himself, in whatever concerned his work as a ruler, into a circumspect and clear-sighted man of business. But what won all hearts was the grave gentleness with which he treated everyone, the delicacy of his feeling, and the unstudied observance of all the forms of politeness towards those with whom he came in contact. I never heard a hard or discourteous word from him, nor remarked in him a gesture that did not answer to the strictest conception of good breeding. We children beheld in him, and justly, our ideal of courtesy, and although he never said a harsh word to us, we bore towards him, through all our love and confidence, a reverence bordering on fear.

"He never lectured, seldom blamed; praised unwillingly; and yet the effect of his individuality was so powerful that we accomplished more than if we had been praised or blamed. When he was once asked by a relation whether we were industrious and well-behaved, he answered, 'My children cannot be naughty, and as they know well that they must learn in order to be worthy men, so I do not trouble myself about it.'"

There was an inherent delicacy of constitution in the younger boy, and he was subject to attacks of croup up to his tenth year. It is worth recording that while treated for this with leeches, he used to indulge in

building his most magnificent philanthropical castles for the future. There was a certain Spartan severity in subjecting the delicate child of girlish slightness and fragility of appearance to precisely the same regimen as his much larger and stronger brother.

"And I cried," appears much too often in the journal that the little fellow kept, even before he was six years old; but Herr Florschutz, the Rath, or Councillor, as he was entitled, was very kind and tender to them, and often carried the tired little Albert up to bed in the bare attic, where the tutor slept in the same room with his pupils, and was ready to attend when, as the little diary says, "My cough was worse—I was so frightened that I cried."

Still it was a happy, wholesome life, spent as much as possible in the open, and chiefly at Rosenau—the Rose-mead—a country house about four miles from Coburg, placed on a knoll which is the last space of a range of wooded hills above the valley of the Itz. It is a house of no pretension, with high gable ends, and an entrance tower, but commanding a charming view over the valley from the terraced garden, where in summer weather the little princes used to breakfast. The plantations and woods of fir trees and abeles gave a large range of delightful walks and rides: there was an artificial piece of water, a dairy farm, a skittle ground, and all that could serve to afford healthy

and wholesome exercise and amusement to growing lads.

The day's routine was to rise between six and seven, and breakfast between nine and ten—with the Duke if he were in the same house—but dinner was at one for the boys alone. When they were at Coburg, they came down after their father's three o'clock meal, and later visited his mother: they supped at seven, by which time little Albert, who never could endure late hours, was so tired that he was often picked up asleep in a corner. Lessons were given in the intervals, very short ones at first, so as to leave much time for out-of-door exercise and amusement.

After Church every Sunday, twelve or thirteen boys of their own age were invited to play with them, and they were left to themselves entirely without restraint.

Their tutor lamented the irregularity and interruption caused by the long out-of-door breakfasts; but the Duke evidently thought his own companionship an important part of their education, and made them listen to conversation and take interest in all literary and artistic pursuits. If he saw their attention wandering, he gave a look equivalent to a long reproof. All sorts of manly exercises, riding, fishing, hunting, and driving, were made familiar to the lads from nine years old; nor would their father suffer any complaints of discomfort or slight hurts, in order to make them hardy.

"I remember," says the elder brother "that we had, in a hard winter, to ride across the mountains between Coburg and Gotha, and to endure the most frightful cold. Thus did my father teach us the self-command of adults, and made us behave in a manly fashion in the most uncomfortable situations."

In spite of all this rigorous treatment, and severe study, the two brothers had a thoroughly happy boyhood. There was in the young Albert that best of all endowments, intense relish and eagerness for whatever might be his employment. In the large party that frolicked at Rosenau, little Albert was king of the sports, and sometimes showed himself, as such kings are apt to do, masterful and domineering, but always chivalrous and generous. The child was already father to the man when he wrote in his Journal, of January 17th:—"When I woke this morning, the first thing I thought of was the afternoon, when we expected our playfellows. The tallest, and one of the cleverest, Emil Gilsa, was to be an emperor; Ernest was to be Duke of Saxony." The chosen emperor was, however, unwell, and another was chosen from the boys who took the part of dukes, the lot falling on Albert.

The cousins often met at Rosenau, and Ferdinand and Augustus, the sons of Prince Ferdinand, and Arthur, son to the Princess Sophie, who had married Count Mensdorff, were all playing with some other boys. "Some of us," writes Count Arthur, "were to storm the old ruined tower at the side of the Castle, which

the others were to defend. One of us suggested that there was a place at the back where we could get in without being seen, and thus capture it without difficulty. Albert declared that

"'this would be most unbecoming in a Saxon knight, who should always attack the enemy in front,' and so we fought for the tower so honestly and vigorously that Albert, by mistake, for I was on his side, gave me a blow on the nose, of which I still bear the mark. I need not say how sorry he was."

When the boys were about twelve years old their time of study was extended, and four or five hours a day were spent on them:—

"The main strength of Florschutz lay in his extensive and thorough study of history. . . . . Already in our boyhood we knew that (in the early middle age) there had been a grand epoch of German life and culture which had been little valued by our semi-French forefathers of the last century."

And the most lively interest was awakened in the romance and poetry of the early Christian Germany.

Religiously, they were instructed by Herr Bretschneider, whose teachings of the Lutheran doctrine had a deep and lasting influence, alike in devotion, conduct, and principle, though there was a certain vagueness of dogma.

It was in 1831 that the boys' mother died. They had never seen her since their infancy, and she grieved much in her last illness over the fear that they had forgotten her; but the memory of her was cherished deeply in

their hearts, and one of the first gifts made by Prince Albert to the Queen was a little pin which she had given to him, and which he had treasured with a child's reserve. Perhaps it was the lack of mother's tenderness in his early years that rendered him shy and stiff in manner.

That same autumn, he lost his grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, who had been very wise and affectionate towards the brothers, and had given them the only womanly love that they enjoyed in their early boyhood.

In 1832, the two princes, then fourteen and thirteen years old, were taken by their father to visit Belgium, where their uncle, Leopold, had, in the previous year, been elected King, after the dissolution of the union with Holland, so arbitrarily arranged by the Congress of Vienna. It was the first opening of their minds to contemporary political events. The present Duke writes:—

"In Brussels, where every square and street still bore traces of the great events which had taken place only two years previously, I imbibed the first practical foreboding of what the modern world seems to be striving for through all its convulsions. We accompanied my father and uncle to the King's first review of a part of the organised Belgian army at Alost, and had permission to visit the Belgian outposts at Antwerp, where the citadel was still in the hands of the Dutch under General Chassé. The sight of the orderly and independent people, and the conversation of their elders, taught the lads much; and they further heard many debates on politics, where their father and uncle were censured in the other little Courts of

Germany for accepting the fruits of a Revolution in a manner that was thought unworthy of members of one of the oldest princely families in Germany. For many years in certain circles the name of our house was only mentioned with a sort of horror."

Soon after their return, the Duke, after the strange German fashion, married his niece, Marie, daughter to his sister, Antoinette, wife to Duke Alexander of Wurtemburg. She was a kindly stepmother, and head of the Court, which seems to have become more lively.

Practical jokes were rather too prevalent, and the good Rath Florschutz solemnly narrates a serious scrape, when Prince Albert beguiled his chemical instructor into filling little glasses of the size of a pea with sulphuretted hydrogen, with which he pelted the audience at the theatre.

There was a warfare between him and his cousin, Linette, as the Princess Caroline of Reuss Ebersdorff was called. He filled the pockets of her opera-cloak with soft cheese, and she retaliated by filling his bed with frogs, creatures of which he had a strange horror ever since; as a little boy, he had triumphantly placed a handsome green frog in the midst of a party of tea-drinking ladies, and had been infected by their disgust and dismay.

In general, he loved all sorts of animals and all natural history, and a little museum, collected and kept in order by the brothers, gave them infinite delight and amusement—both out of doors and in—for the dusting and

arranging were left to them, and the collection was finally expanded into a public museum. The elder brother thinks this was very useful to them. "The natural sciences," he says, "have something emancipating in them;" and he adds, "we were educated with fewer prejudices than other princes."

They shot birds for their collection, and shared in field sports; but Prince Albert never was devoted to them, though he was a good shot. He thought they led to waste of time, and was too tender-hearted not to be unhappy at the sight of a wounded animal. Indoors, chess was a great amusement, and the brothers and their cousins often played the four-sided game, and, as it is confessed, disputed over it. And Prince Albert was a formidable person in argument. His brother says:—

"A decidedly *doctrinaire* manner of treating everything was peculiar to him even at an earlier age. He possessed great dexterity in logically arranging the most difficult themes under discussion, and in enforcing his views, even if they were by no means always the most correct. This mental gift and exercise often gave him, in later life, a great superiority over others."

He was thinking out many things. Count Arthur Mensdorff quotes this passage from one of his letters:—

"The poor soldiers always do their duty in the most brilliant manner; but as soon as matters come again into the hands of politicians and diplomatists, everything is again spoiled and confused. Oxenstiern's saying to his son may still be quoted: 'My son, when you look at things more closely, you will be surprised to find with how little wisdom the world is governed.' I should like to add, 'and with how little morality.'"

In the spring of 1835, the two brothers were prepared for confirmation by a pastor named Jacoby, a Court preacher at Coburg, of very wide knowledge of Church history and power of imparting it, so that both could acquit themselves excellently in the public examination which precedes Lutheran Confirmation. "My brother took the matter in its full weight," writes the Duke, "for what Florschutz says is quite right, that he was unusually grave and thoughtful."

The ceremony took place on Palm Sunday, and, as it was considered a matter of national interest, invitations were issued to all the authorities in the Duchies of Coburg and Gotha, and to deputations from the clergy, towns, and villages. These, with all the members of the ducal family at hand, and a good many grandees and people of Coburg besides, were all assembled in "The Giant's Hall" of the Castle of Coburg, on the previous day, to hear the preliminary examination. A sort of altar was at one end, and in front of this Dr. Jacoby and the Princes stood. The first verse of the hymn "*Veni Creator*" was sung, and then followed the public examination, a catechising on all the articles of faith of the Confession of Augsburg. The youths answered all correctly and reverently, and with evidence of thought and feeling. The object of this remarkable examination was to give the audience a clear insight into their faith and principles, and it lasted an hour.

When the question came whether they would steadfastly hold to the Evangelical Church, the elder answers for both—"My brother and I firmly intend to abide faithfully to the acknowledged truth."

Then there was a prayer, the second verse of the hymn, the blessing, and the third verse. The next day the actual Confirmation took place in the Castle Chapel, by Dr. Gonzler, the Superintendent-General, the Princes first repeating the creed. There was a sermon, a celebration of the Holy Communion; an afternoon service at the Cathedral, to which all the Court went in procession; a public dinner afterwards, and a banquet the next day. The City of Coburg presented Rath Florschutz with a diamond ring in token of satisfaction with his pupils, and certainly there is something very touching in the participation of the whole little State in the public religious profession of their future ruler.

This rite is reckoned in Germany as the close of childhood. King Leopold sent his nephews a letter on the occasion, in which he impressed on them this special maxim: "A Christian is one who understands the teachings of his religion, and makes them enter into his daily life."

An expedition, which further opened the minds of the two youths, followed soon after their confirmation, when they were taken to Schwerin to visit the Grand Duke of Mecklenberg Schwerin, their maternal great

grandfather. More than fifty near relations of this patriarch were there collected, many of them destined to be highly distinguished. Among these the brothers specially admired the Crown Prince of Prussia, who, five years later, became Frederick William IV. No one could then have guessed how disappointing a person he would prove as King, for his ability, his varied learning, his liberal opinions and his earnest piety made him the object of many hopes. The Coburg memoirs thus describes him :—

"He was then in his forty-first year, and already of a corpulence unusual at his age. His refined, intellectual, lively countenance, the animation of his narratives and of his sympathy, the sarcastic and constant readiness of his remarks, could not fail to awaken in young people like my brother and myself a kind of enthusiasm for the versatile heir of Prussia. Added to this the Crown Prince took much notice of us. He asked affectionately about our studies and pursuits, and seemed pleased with the cheerful and confident way in which we youths looked out upon life. In all those schemes that we, as German princes, made of working out the improvement of the whole world, and the condition of our fatherland, he promised us his friendly protection. He semed convinced that the time was come for laying the axe to the evils of the time, and he could say beautiful things about the needs of Germany; and by his whole view of affairs was entirely different from that of the rest of the princes."

It is plain how to the lads of sixteen and seventeen, who had yet to learn how little that vacillating nature could endure the shocks which his liberal sentiments brought on him, these conversations with an elder man were the greatest stimulus, and helped to form the

designs to which both of them constantly adhered, for the union and liberation of their country.

After the festival days at Schwerin, the two princes were taken to Berlin to be presented to the King of Prussia. They were kindly received and lodged in the palace, and were much interested in the fatherly old Frederick William III., who had weathered the terrible storms of the early part of the century, and who is now chiefly remembered as the vanquished at Jena, and husband of the heroic Queen Louisa. At Dresden, whither they afterwards went, King Anton and Prince Max had recollections from the other side of that great struggle.

Thence the Duke and his sons went to Vienna, where they were the guests of his brother Ferdinand, whose home was there. The death of the Emperor Francis was approaching, and hopes were entertained that his good-natured successor, Ferdinand, would be less arbitrary and severe towards liberals, but these were vain, and though Prince Metternich, with his unfailing courtesy, treated the Duke as an old friend, the reception by the rest of the Court was as cold as at Berlin the welcome had been warm. The Coburgs were marked as dangerous in those days when the miseries of the revolution were not forgotten, and every symptom of reaction was crushed out.

The liberal party in Portugal was inclining to the

choice of Prince Ferdinand of Coburg's eldest son, as the husband of the young queen, Maria de Gloria, and the terms were decided on during this visit. Thus this journey served to introduce Prince Albert and his brother to the knowledge of actual politics, and open their minds to the great world beyond their studies.

Altogether they enjoyed the journey very much, while the ladies at home, the Dowager Duchess of Gotha, and the Duchess of Coburg, were extremely afraid of their being overdone with long journeys and late hours, and indeed Prince Albert wrote to his step-mother that:—

"it would require a giant's strength to endure all the fatigues we have had to go through. Visits, parades, balls, *déjeuners*, dinners, follow each other in quick succession, and we have not been allowed to miss one of them."

CHAPTER II.

YOUTH.

1836–1840.

Question of the marriage of Princess Victoria—Influence of King Leopold and Stockmar—The brothers visit England—Impressions of Prince Albert—Visit to Paris—Society at Brussels—The University of Bonn—Death of William IV.—Congratulations to Queen Victoria—Tour in Switzerland and Northern Italy—Second visit to Brussels—Negotiations for the marriage—Duke Ernest's reminiscences—Departure from Bonn—Danger from fire—Departure of Prince Ernest from Dresden—Second visit to Italy.

THE accomplishment of a marriage between the heiress of England and the young cousin at Gotha had been the vision of the family ever since both were born; but it had to be kept in the background, since William IV. disliked the Coburg family, and was often absolutely rude to the Duchess of Kent. His wish was that his niece should be the wife of Prince Alexander of Holland, a son of the Dutch sovereign whom, as Prince of Orange, poor Princess Charlotte had found intolerable.

King Leopold was the active mover in the matter, in council with his familiar, Stockmar, who played throughout a curious part in the domestic affairs of the

family. A native of Coburg, he had become physician to Prince Leopold, and had been with him during the year of marriage in England, gradually growing into a most confidential counsellor and go-between, though in no official capacity, and no doubt, therefore, the more available. He had a clear head, considerable foresight, and that power of seeing his way through an entanglement which constitutes a man of business; and, though he was less a favourite at Coburg than at Brussels, the Duke leant much on King Leopold, so that the Doctor became the moving influence.

Prince Albert and his brother, however, knew nothing of these ultimate views when it was made known to them that they were to pay a visit to their aunt in England by themselves. Their father went to Holland with them, and saw them off from Rotterdam, after an expedition to the Hague. "We travelled incognito," says Prince Albert, "till the chamberlain of the Princess of Orange, saluting us with a malicious smile, unmasked us." King William, perhaps suspicious of the cause of the visit he could not prevent, had invited his Dutch prince to London at the same time, and showed them as little attention as possible. Poor old William IV.! Though he had a kindly heart, the coarse fibre of the Brunswick family was in him, intensified by the bluffness of naval life, and there was almost an affectation of the unmannerliness of the conventional sailor. He was

advanced in years, and out of health, and little inclined to pay attention to the two princes, though he felt obliged to invite them for a single day to Windsor, where he fell asleep in the midst of the long dinner.

The brothers had no attendants, and were lodged as guests at Kensington, where the Duchess of Kent was kind and affectionate, but her daughter was still in the schoolroom, under very careful supervision, and was never to be seen except in the presence of her mother or her governess, Baronness Lehzen. Prince Albert was her junior by three months, and at seventeen was in her eyes a mere boy. Besides, English was always spoken at Kensington, and this was to the cousins as yet only a book language; nor had they as yet any idea that the visit was more than an introduction to their relations and to foreign lands.

Prince Albert wrote to his stepmother:—

"The climate of this country, the different way of living, and the late hours, do not agree with me. I am, however, quite upon my legs. My first appearance was at a *levée* of the King's, which was long and fatiguing, but very interesting. The same evening we dined at Court, and at night there was a beautiful concert, at which we had to stay till two o'clock. The next day the King's birthday was kept. We went in the middle of the day to St. James's Palace, at which about three thousand people passed before the King and Queen and the other high dignitaries to offer them congratulations. There was a great dinner in the evening, and a concert which lasted till one o'clock. You can well imagine that I had many hard battles to fight against sleepiness during these late entertainments. . . . . Our dear aunt is very kind to us, and does everything she can to please us, and our cousin also is very amiable."

The youths profited by the opportunity of seeing the Duke of Wellington, the hero of Europe, and among the lesser celebrities Lord Westminster, a friend of their father's in the time of the great war. They saw Captain Marryatt, whose sailor novels were in the height of popularity; and Disraeli, who was then in their estimation, "a vain young Jew with Radical opinions"—wearing his left arm in a sling, as his enemies averred, for the sake of making himself interesting.

Altogether, English society was cold, formal, and oppressive in the eyes of the youths; and when, at the end of a month, they went on to Paris, they were much happier, in spite of being lodged in the Hôtel des Princes, which, according to Prince Albert, was "a most horrible place, with such a noise in the street that there was no hearing one's own voice."

Though they were not the guests of the Court, Louis Philippe treated them with great warmth and kindness, and a sort of sympathy arose between him and Prince Ernest such as is rarely possible between an elderly and a very young man. His youthful adventures had made him a perfect master of German in its various dialects, and he was full of anecdote, and told much of his strange experiences in the days of the Revolution. The Duke of Orleans was in Africa, but the younger brothers laid the foundation of enduring friendship with their visitors, who were unaware that this sojourn was

also intended as an experiment in the direction of marriage, Princess Clementine being thought of for Prince Ernest, though this was prevented by the difference of religion. The easy family life of the Roi Bourgeois and his admirable Queen Amélie was altogether greatly enjoyed by the brothers.

In June they returned to Brussels, where King Leopold and Dr. Stockmar had been discussing plans for their education. They were settled for the time under the King's eye, in a pleasant little villa with a garden on the Boulevard de l'Observation at Brussels, with the Rath Florschutz as their constant master, and likewise Baron Weichmann, who had been in the German legion in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, while they were to study higher mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy with M. Quételet, the author of "*Le Système Sociale et les lois qui le régissent,*" and a man of almost universal acquirements. At the same time, King Leopold by his conversation did his part towards leading their views on politics from theory to practice, and gave them the opportunity of meeting very remarkable personages who appeared at his Court—even Poles and Carbonari. The prisoners of Spielberg had been released after the death of Francis II., and there were among them those whose poetry and whose narratives did more, it was said, to shake Austrian power in Italy than an army. Count Arrivabene was a centre, and at his house the Princes

met Silvio Pellico, the object of their warm interest. These men were mentioned with dread and horror at almost all the European Courts, and there was no small surprise in Germany, not only at King Leopold's tolerating their presence, but at the Duke of Coburg allowing his sons to have any intercourse with them.

"The diplomatic corps must certainly have written a good deal about the royal nephews; but we had not the least perception that we were doing what might be taken amiss, though it was not long before it was evident to us that our whole demeanour at Brussels had made a very unfavourable impression among various German families."

On several occasions other German Princes treated the two youths with an icy stiffness that roused great indignation in Prince Albert, and incited him to use that talent for satire and ridicule which in after life was so carefully suppressed. There was grave debate between father, uncle, and adviser over the next step in life, and it resulted in the two youths being placed at the University of Bonn, where a small detached house was taken for them to reside in with the Rath Florschutz and Baron Weichmann. There they spent what they considered as the pleasantest and most profitable eighteen months of their lives.

There were several highly distinguished professors, in especial, Schlegel the younger, Perthes, Lobell, and Fichte, and there were students of all ranks from all parts of Germany, several of them more or less related

to the Princes of Coburg. In especial, a warm friendship was formed* by Prince Albert with Prince William of Löwenstein, who set down, among the recollections of him asked for by the Queen, how in the long walks the young men took together Prince Albert loved to discuss metaphysics, jurisprudence, philosophy, and the like, till Florschutz interfered to turn the conversation into more commonplace channels.

At the same time, however, the Prince distinguished himself in all sorts of manly exercises, and in a great fencing match, where there were twenty-five or thirty competitors, carried off the first prize. Fun and frolic abounded. He was an excellent mimic, and some of the Professors were such oddities as to afford standing jokes, which Duke Ernest records with the tender glee wherewith men look back to their student days, dwelling with a smile on the distress of the stiff and stately Colonel Weichmann, when their Serene Highnesses perpetrated student songs, and drew caricatures of the Professors, who to the surprise of the youths were infinitely more aristocratic in their ideas than themselves, the descendants of one of the oldest stocks in Germany or Europe.

There were delightful expeditions into the Siebengebirge, with their greyhounds, one of which, named Eôs, black, with a white chest and paws, was for many years Prince Albert's beloved companion.

The death of William IV., on June the 20th, 1837, removed the chief obstacle to the family designs. There had been a little formal correspondence between the cousins ever since the visit to England, and Albert wrote his letter of congratulation in English.

"You are now Queen of the mightiest land in Europe. In your hands lie the happiness of millions. May Heaven assist and strengthen you with its strength in that high but difficult task. I hope that your reign may be long, happy and glorious, and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects."

There is nothing memorable here, except the prominence of the idea of duty and responsibility and the tendency to be didactic.

The family began to be in agitation respecting the desired match, and it was thought advisable to remove the young men from any discussion that might reach their ears by sending them to spend their vacation in a walking tour in Switzerland and Northern Italy, an expedition which they thoroughly enjoyed, with that peculiar zest belonging to the sense that it would probably be the last pleasure taken in the old inseparable manner. "The parting," Prince Albert wrote to the Duchess of Saxe-Gotha, "is ever before me, we would therefore, as long as time allows us, do all we can to gild the pill and soften the pain."

Flowers and relics collected on that journey were sent to the royal cousin, a "rose des Alpes" from the

Righi Pass, views of all the noted scenery, a scrap of Voltaire's writing, all arranged in a little book. The tour extended as far as Venice, after which there was a visit to the Duchess of Gotha, and a term of hard study at Bonn.

The Christmas vacation was to have been spent at Brussels, but this was prevented by a hurt which Prince Albert received in the riding school from his horse refusing a leap, and swerving so as to jam his knee against the wall. It made him lame for a week or two, and left a permanent scar.

The intended visit was therefore not paid till March, and then it was that King Leopold first seriously broached to his younger nephew the possibility of the marriage with the young Queen, though no doubt the idea was not new to him. He had been encouraged to begin a correspondence with his cousin after his visit to England, and had forwarded to her on his travels the little curiosities that he thought likely to interest her; but she had, since her accession, ceased to reply. The possibility must have occurred to him, though England on the whole was inclined to expect that the Queen's husband would be one of her two English cousins, the sons of the Dukes of Cumberland and Cambridge. King Leopold was, however, the person on whom his niece most relied, and after a conversation with his nephew he wrote to Stockmar:—

"He looks at the question from the most elevated and honourable point of view; he considers that troubles must be inseparable from all human positions, and that, therefore, if one must be subject to worries and annoyances, it is better to be so for some great and worthy object than for contemptible trifles. I have told him that his great youth would make it necessary to postpone the marriage for some years. I found him very sensible on all these points. But one thing he observed with truth, 'I am ready,' he said, 'to submit to the delay if only I have some certain assurance to go upon. But if, after waiting perhaps for three years, I should find that the Queen no longer desired the marriage, it would place me in a very ridiculous position, and would, to a certain extent, ruin all the prospects of my life.'"

This was quite just, but womanly coyness, together with the newly-acquired sense of power, made it a difficult and delicate matter to press the Queen; and there is something very sweet and candid in her own confession of regret at the suspense she caused by her delay, making difficulties that she could not have understood, though she still intended her ultimate choice to fall on the Prince. Nor perhaps were her subjects eager for her marriage. The tradition of "good Queen Bess" was in favour of a virgin Queen, and there was some impatience and some contempt of petty German principalities, which seemed to exist for the purpose of providing partners for royalty. The Duke must here speak on this family matter.

"Victoria stood alone in her youth, in a solitude without a guide. My aunt, the Duchess of Kent, though a woman of very excellent qualities, had no great influence over her daughter. Thus, from the vivacity and the development that could not fail soon to unfold them-

selves in the rapidly matured heiress of England, the eighteen-year-old ruler showed a decidedly unbroken will. In Prince Albert's book there is a little note which betrays a circumstance that caused more difficulty than is commonly believed. As is well known, Victoria's governess was the (afterwards) Baroness Lehzen. The clever woman shows herself in a letter upon a little incident, which must have been very enticing to a governess, and in which she played a little on the future aims of the Princess, then twelve years old. She laid before her, behind her tutor's back, a pedigree in the history by which the Princess might perceive that she was the true heiress to the English throne. On this discovery, a conversation followed, in which we may say with a certain humour, the governess' talent for rule may be perceived."

This is a curious way of viewing the conversation, which to other eyes looks so simple, and the tutor, Dean Davys, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough, certainly was not ignorant that the genealogy was laid before his pupil, but regarded as an exercise. Still, Madame Lehzen had undoubtedly a strong influence, and a year or two was needed to make the true and noble nature of the Queen feel, through the education of experience, the need of a perfectly confidential supporter, on whom she could lean, and who could supply what even her mother could not afford her.

The time of waiting was to be spent first in completing the course at Bonn, and then in a journey to Italy.

In the meantime, the Duke of Coburg went to England to be present at the coronation, and received from the Queen the Order of the Garter.

In August, the establishment at Bonn was broken up.

Prince Albert compared the removal to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and it involved great changes; for the faithful Florschutz, who had watched over the brothers for fifteen or sixteen years, laid down his charge, and remained at Bonn. Moreover, for the first time the two princes were to begin on different lines of life, for the hereditary prince was to enter the army of the King of Saxony, the younger brother to spend the winter in Italy under the charge of Stockmar, and with a young English officer, Sir Francis Seymour.

Just before the parting, the brothers were in some danger from a fire in the palace at Coburg, in a wing where no one was sleeping but themselves and their Swiss valet, Cart. Prince Albert was wakened by the smell of burning, found the rooms full of smoke, and in the fourth a burst of flame. After calling up his two companions, they closed all the doors, and shut themselves up with the fire.

"We had only two jugs of water and a jug of camomile-tea, of which we made the most," writes Prince Albert. "Ernest took my cloak and his own and threw them on the flames, while I dropped all my bedding there, and pressed the mattresses against the burning wall. Cart lifted a marble table with incredible strength, and threw it against the bookcase enveloped in flames, causing it to fall down. Having thus subdued the fire, we could think of calling for more help. Ernest ran, just as he got out of bed, to the sentry, who gave the alarm, whilst I and Cart were still working upstairs. The heat and smoke were so powerful that all the windows had fallen out, even the glasses of the framed pictures were cracked and the pictures

shrivelled, and the paint of the doors is quite charred. Help now came in haste from all sides, a number of workmen brought water up and extinguished the now smouldering fire. A bookshelf with many books, and all our prints, two chairs, a looking-glass, a table, have been burnt. There is no other harm done, but that Cart and I have burnt the soles of our feet as we trod barefooted among the ashes."

In another month, Prince Ernest left Bonn for Dresden.

"Now," writes the younger brother to the elder Duchess, "Ernest has slept through his first night at Dresden. This day will also bring to him the feeling that something is wanting. I wrote to him to-day, and expect a few lines from him to-morrow, or the day after, which I will send to you at once if you like it. I have not written to you for some time, it was because during the last days we had so much to talk and to care about. I am sure you will not be angry with me. I must now give up the custom of saying 'we,' and use the *I*, which seems so egotistical and cold. In *we* everything sounded softer, for it expresses the harmony between different souls, the I, rather the resistance of the individual against outward forces, though also confidence in its own strength."

Shortly after, he set out on the Italian tour, and then it was that Stockmar, now a Baron, established an influence over him which almost amounted to ascendancy, and lasted unbroken to the last hour of his life. It was by no means through any form of adulation. The ex-physician never scrupled to find fault and tell unpalatable truths in the most uncompromising, heavy, and sententious manner; but this Telemachus never failed in gratitude and affection to his Mentor, and accepted his counsel in a manner really remarkable in one who had so strong and substantial a nature as Prince Albert, and such decided

and original views. There must have been something peculiarly congenial in the two minds which maintained such a friendship, and that Stockmar enjoyed and never abused the entire confidence of two such men as Leopold and Albert of Coburg is a full proof that he merited it.

Florence, with all its resources, charmed the Prince, and he resided there for nine months, studying much, and availing himself of the opportunities of working up his already remarkable knowledge of art and music. The gallery, he said, intoxicated him with delight; he often played on the fine organ in the Church of La Badia, and took long walks in the beautiful country around. He usually rose at six, studied till noon, dined at two, and went to bed at nine, unless obliged, somewhat against his will, to go into society. The student life he had always led made him shrink from gaieties. "Small talk" was always an effort to him; his self-controlled, reserved nature began to show itself in this, his first separation from all his home companions, and he was more at ease with old scholars than with young ladies. Nor could he be induced to care for politics, and never willingly touched a newspaper.

In the ensuing spring he completed the tour in Italy, but though he felt the great benefit of the actual sight of all the wonders of Rome and Pompeii, he was on the whole disappointed in Italy, alike in "climate, scenery, artistic feeling, and skill."

It was the time of Italy's chief depression, and no doubt he felt the trodden down and restless state in which she lived. Moreover, the Italian hatred of Austria extended to all Germans, and no doubt rendered the young prince less welcome.

CHAPTER III.

MARRIAGE.

1839–1840.

Imminence of the marriage — Prince Albert's appearance and character—Second visit of the Princes to England—King Leopold's letter — The Queen's intentions announced to Lord Melbourne—The betrothal — Communications to Stockmar and King Leopold—Announcement of the betrothal—Its reception by the nation—The Duke of Wellington's amendment—Precedence and income—Rejoicings in Coburg—Investiture of the Garter —Farewells—The marriage ceremony.

THE two brothers met again at Coburg, and the elder having attained his twenty-first year, the younger was at the same time declared to be of age.

The question of the marriage was becoming imminent. Queen Victoria was reluctant, with much of maidenly reserve, and something likewise of the enjoyment of freedom and power; and, on the other hand, Prince Albert could not but be anxious to know his fate in time to embrace some other career if rejected. Moreover, the failure of the Tory Ministry, on account of the misunderstanding with regard to Sir Robert Peel's intentions as to the ladies of the Royal Household, had made it plain,

alike to the foreign kindred and the English nation, that the young Queen ought not to stand entirely alone, but should be saved from her own mistakes; and though she wrote to her uncle that she was too young, and that she still wished to defer the crisis for three years, it was resolved to send the Prince to England, in the trust that a decision might be made without a delay so unsuitable to the Prince's dignity and prospects.

Since his first visit, Prince Albert had outgrown his boyhood during his residence in Italy, and was much more manly looking and less entirely the lad who had never been far from home. The perfectly moulded features and classical profile had assumed their form, the eyes were blue, the hair light-coloured, the complexion somewhat pale, and the figure, though tall and graceful, rather slightly formed. There was a tendency to look pale and exhausted after exertion, which made Stockmar pronounce his constitution not strong, though capable of being established by care and prudence. His disposition this friend considered to be thoroughly kind and amiable, with an ever-ruling desire to appear pleasant, an inclination to *espièglerie*, and a habit of not dwelling long on a subject. Stockmar also considered him to be unwilling to use much exertion, and not persevering enough in his excellent intentions and noble resolutions, and to be more devoted to accomplishments than practical concerns. There was an entire

freedom from any low or coarse taste, or vicious inclination, and the utmost refinement of mind and manners, together with good sense, strong will, high principle of duty, and a power of forbearance, which eminently fitted him for the peculiar position destined to him. Still, all was entirely uncertain and dependant on the young Queen's inclination; and there were several other suitors, of whom the most formidable was the Duke of Nemours, son to Louis Philippe. His sister, Louise, the second wife of the King of the Belgians, was earnestly anxious for his success, in spite of what to English eyes was the decisive objection of his being of the Roman Communion.

In October, 1839, the two brothers went to England, Prince Albert feeling the great difficulties of his position, and the need of fraternal support and confidence. For, though Whig and Tory alike wished the Queen to be married, German alliances were not popular. Some would have preferred one of her English cousins, and the Conservatives were prepared to distrust any choice under the Melbourne Ministry, and especially of a prince of the liberal tendencies of the House of Coburg.

The princes took with them the following letter from their uncle:—

"LACHEN, *October* 26, 1839.

"MY DEAR VICTORIA,—

"Your cousins will be themselves the bearers of these lines. I recommend them to your *bienveillance*. They are good and honest

creatures, deserving your kindness, and not pedantic, but really sensible and trustworthy. I have told them that your great wish is that they should be quite unconstrained with you. I am sure that if you have anything to recommend them, they will be quite glad to learn it from you.

"My dear Victoria,

"Your most devoted uncle,

"LEOPOLD R."

They reached Windsor Castle on October 10th, at half-past seven in the evening, and were met by their young hostess herself at the top of the staircase, when, if there had been any inclination at the time of the stiff and shy meeting of the boy and girl two years previously, it was instantly renewed, and the young hearts settled the matter as readily as if they had belonged to a cottage youth and maiden.

The travellers' luggage was not come, so that they could not appear at dinner, but came into the drawing-room in the evening; and the Queen immediately decided, as she wrote to her uncle, that "Albert was very fascinating."

Each morning, after her private breakfast, her cousins paid her a visit in her private apartments and lunched with her and her mother. Then all rode out together, and in the evening there was a great dinner, and three times a week dancing after it. By the 15th, four days after the arrival, the Queen told Lord Melbourne that she had quite made up her mind to the marriage. He had always been her kind protector, in

a fatherly manner, and his answer was:—"I think it will be very well received, for I hear that there is an anxiety now that it should be, and I am very glad of it. You will be much more comfortable, for a woman cannot stand alone for any time, in whatever position she may be."

Then came what the Queen might well call, as she did in conversation with Lady Blomfield, the most awkward moment of her life. In her own words:—

"At half-past twelve I sent for Albert. He came to the closet, where I was alone, and after a few minutes I said to him that I thought he would be aware why I wished him to come, and that it would make me happy if he would consent to what I wished, namely, to marry me. There was no hesitation on his part, but the offer was received with the greatest demonstrations of kindness and affection. . . . . I told him I was quite unworthy of him. . . . . He said he would be very happy to spend his life with me. . . . . I then told him to fetch Ernest, which he did, who congratulated us both and seemed very happy."

The Prince wrote at once to Stockmar the next day:—"I write to you on one of the happiest days of my life, to give you the most welcome news possible. . . . . ." And he ends with:—"More, or more seriously, I cannot write, for at this moment I am too much bewildered:—

"Das Auge sieht das Himmel offen
Es schwimmt der Herz in Seligkeit."

At the same time the Queen announced her decision to King Leopold:—"I love him more than I can say,

and shall do everything in my power to render this sacrifice (for such it is in my opinion) as small as I can." She further begged that the engagement might be an absolute secret, except from his father, until the announcement should be made to the Privy Council; and this was deferred till the princes should have left England. King Leopold declared that, like Simeon, he could say, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace!" and augured excellently, from the character of his nephew, and the tokens that the young people were thoroughly and heartily in love, and thus Prince Albert was full of hope as to the capabilities of future position. He tells his Mentor, Stockmar, that his ideal for himself was:—

"A personality which shall win the respect, the love and the confidence of the Queen and of the nation, must be the groundwork of my position. This personal character gives security for the motives of our action, so that, if errors occur, they will more easily be pardoned on this account, for even the noblest and fairest undertakings fail in securing support to a man who is not capable of inspiring this confidence."

Poor Prince Albert was destined to find this indeed true, in an opposite sense from what he intended, though he already knew, as he told his stepmother, "that the sky will not always be blue and unclouded." The only other person taken into confidence was the Duchess of Gotha, who was so much attached to him that the loss of him from her neighbourhood was a heavy trial.

In England, the state of things was an open secret, and it must have been tolerably evident when the Queen and Prince Albert appeared together to review the second battalion of the Rifle Brigade in the Home Park, the Hereditary Prince, who had been laid up by an attack of jaundice, being only able to look from his window.

He was well enough to return home on November 14th. On the 23rd, the Privy Council assembled, and the Queen read aloud to them, with an effort, but feeling strengthened by the feeling of a bracelet with the Prince's miniature on her wrist, the formal announcement of her betrothal; and at the opening of Parliament she had to go through the same ordeal.

Courtesy and respect were shown, and all were touched by the maidenly modesty and sweetness of the young betrothed girl who had to act and speak for herself; but the feeling of the country was not enthusiastic. There was an acquiescence in the fact that the Queen had better be married, and that no much more satisfactory choice could have been made; but at the same time German connections were not much relished by the insular mind, and the Prince was even younger than the bride herself. Moreover, there was the further disadvantage of the choice having been made at the close of a Ministry which had become unpopular, and was only retained in office in consequence of the

mistake of the inexperienced Queen respecting their intentions towards her female friends. The Prince himself was most anxious to avoid identification with any party, and when Stockmar was sent to London to arrange his household, wrote to the Queen: "I should wish particularly that the selection should be made without regard to politics, for if I am really to keep myself free from all parties, my people must not belong exclusively to one side. Above all, these appointments should not be mere 'party rewards,' but they should possess some other recommendation besides that of political considerations. Let the men be either of very high rank, or very accomplished, or very clever, or persons who have performed important services for England. It is very necessary they should be chosen from both sides, the same number of Whigs and Tories, and above all it is my wish that they should be men of high character, who, as I have said, shall already have distinguished themselves in their several positions, whether it be in the army or navy, or in the scientific world." Thus the Prince was annoyed that Mr. Anson, who was appointed to his private secretaryship, had fulfilled the same office towards Lord Melbourne; and though their intercourse ripened afterwards into friendship, the appointment was a mistake, compromising the Prince in the eyes of the other party, and giving him a secretary not favourably dis-

posed towards Germans, so that there was a danger of isolation from old connections.

In England, distrust of the unknown naturally prevailed. It had not been thought needful to specify the religion of the descendant of that Elector of Saxony, who had been deprived by Charles V., on account of the Lutheran insurrection, which broke up the Council of Trent; nor had there ever been an inter-marriage with Romanists in the line of succession. Thus a report arose from the omission, on the one hand that Prince Albert was a Romanist, on the other that he was an atheist. To reassure the public, the Duke of Wellington moved in the House of Lords, as what Charles Greville calls "a sop to the silly," that the word Protestant should be introduced into the congratulatory address, on which Lord Brougham observed that "there is no prohibition as to marriage with a Catholic. It is only attended with one penalty, and that penalty is—the forfeiture of the Crown."

Lutherans are in the habit of considering that the English Church only differs from theirs in episcopacy, and they therefore feel no difficulty in conforming, so that Stockmar readily gave the assurances required.

There were further difficulties. Was the future Consort to be made a peer, as George of Denmark had been? The Prince himself desired that no such inconvenient privilege should be conferred on him. Was he

to take precedence of every one except the Queen? Her uncle, the King of Hanover, refused to waive his right, and the Duke of Wellington opposed the consent of the peers; but the matter, which was really one of convenience in every meeting of the royal family, was fixed by an exertion of the royal prerogative.

The income of the bridegroom had to be fixed by the Commons. Lord John Russell moved for a grant of £50,000 annually out of the Consolidated Fund, but Joseph Hume, after being with difficulty dissuaded from leaving the Queen entirely to maintain her husband, moved for cutting the grant down to £21,000, asking if Lord John had considered the consequence of setting so young a man down in London with so large a sum in his pocket. Hume was defeated by 305 to 38, but the Tory, Colonel Sibthorp, moved another amendment, making the allowance £30,000; and this was carried by 262 against 158, many of the Whigs not voting at all, though Lord John Russell treated the matter as a personal injury to the Queen. It is to be remembered that it was a time of considerable distress and depression in the country, that the Prince was absolutely unknown and untried, and that partly from the cumbrous, traditional requirements of the position, partly from their own habits, moderate economy in royal personages was then unexampled, and their heavy debts were almost a matter of course.

The Queen was, however, naturally mortified, and even less inclined than previously to the Tories; but the prudent Stockmar was very anxious to prevent the Prince from owing any grudge to that party, and wrote to him in full how Lord Melbourne attributed the reduction quite as much to the Whigs as to the Tories or Radicals. The Prince himself was resolved to retain no prejudices, and declared afterwards that his chief disappointment was that he should not be able to do as much as he had hoped for the assistance of poor artists and struggling men of genius. In fact, the idea of the dissipated forms of extravagance, such as former examples had made the English people dread, was absolutely alien to his refined and disciplined character. However, these difficulties, and apparent unwilling welcome, naturally added to the pain of severance from the much loved home of his youth, and the brother, father, and grandmother to whom he was fervently attached.

In Coburg, meantime, there was a public and official declaration of the betrothal, which the people received with the affectionate participation of a people who looked on their princes as part of their own family. There was a service in the Chapel, a State banquet, a performance of Cherubini's opera, *Les Deux Journées*, and the people exhibited their joy by firing off guns and pistols all night! No wonder England seemed cold after such exuberance!

In January arrived Lord Torrington and Colonel Grey to fetch the bridegroom home, and to bring him the Order of the Garter. The investiture took place in full assembly in the Throne Room of the Castle at Gotha, and is thus described by Perthès:—

"The winter months of the year have been made interesting and exciting by the chapter of history which has been enacted here. For the ducal papa bound the Garter round his boy's knee amid the roar of one hundred and one cannon. The earnestness and gravity with which the Prince has obeyed this early call to take a European position gave him dignity and standing in spite of his youth, and increased the charm of his aspect. Queen Victoria will find him the right sort of man; and unless some unlucky fatality interpose, he is sure to become the idol of the English nation—silently to influence the English aristocracy, and deeply to affect the destinies of Europe."

Perhaps Perthès was right in his latter prediction, but certainly, as long as he lived, Prince Albert was by no means the idol of the English nation. He came bent on their improvement, and nobody likes it to be assumed that improvement is needed. He did not like English habits or English life, knew that he was leaving all the freedom of the large family connection and easy, friendly, familiar Court, for a place where he should have no companion on absolutely equal terms with him, and that he was condemned to a life of restraint, for which the compensations would be the (as yet untried) affection of his destined wife, and the power of usefulness.

The ceremony of investiture was succeeded by a banquet to 180 persons, when all the appropriate toasts

were drunk, but which ended in an alarm; for when "The Knights of the Order of the Garter" were announced, a window was opened that the signal might be given for the artillery to salute. The light muslin curtain was blown into the candles, the flame spread to all the rest, and there was a general blaze; but, happily, the thin muslin burnt out very quickly, and the ladies' winter dresses being of silk and velvet, no great harm was done, and all the party went cheerfully off to the theatre, to enjoy the performance of *Der Freischutz* and the applause which greeted the young bridegroom; and, according to national German habits, all was over before eleven o'clock.

There was the next day a chamois hunt, in defiance of the weather; and on the Sunday, when the English gentlemen visited the Duchess of Gotha, they found her in such grief at parting with her beloved grandson that she could hardly speak, or keep back her tears; and at the reception in the evening, when there was a farewell exchanged between the Prince and many old friends, the emotion on both sides was such as to astonish the English visitors, used to so much less demonstration.

When the final departure took place, the next morning, the streets, the windows, the housetops, were densely thronged with people, waving their handkerchiefs, and shouting their blessings and good wishes.

The Prince's carriage halted before the Duchess of Gotha's door, while he ran in for a last embrace, and the poor old lady was seen, as he drove away, at her window, stretching out her arms, and crying, "Albert! Albert!" till she was carried away almost fainting by her attendants.

Several cousins and princely friends accompanied the travellers as far as an inn called the "Last Shilling," where the final parting took place, and the party went on in six carriages, three being sent from England. The Duke and his eldest son, of course, accompanied the bridegroom, and he had with him his faithful but independent Swiss valet, Cart, and the favourite Eôs, with a just confidence in the Queen's love of dogs. On the frontier there was a triumphal arch of green fir trees, a scattering of flowers, and a singing of a hymn by a number of young maidens white-robed, in defiance of the season. John Bull's contempt of German petty principalities was meanwhile finding utterance in the pleasing report that the Prince's luggage consisted of a collection of empty boxes, to pass for extensive belongings.

The father and brothers went together to Brussels, where there was a festive reception of the chosen spouse of the English Queen, and then travelled to Calais, where an English fleet awaited them and the wedding guests.

They crossed in the *Ariel*, not used very well by the winds and waves, and all desperately sick; but the resolution with which Prince Albert sat up to bow to the crowds at Dover made the English augur well of his determination. Through Kent there was a cordial welcome and a triumphal progress, delightful at the time, though, as we know, capable of being surpassed, when well-earned affection, instead of future hope, is the mainspring of English enthusiasm.

The party reached Buckingham Palace on the afternoon of February 8th, and were met at the hall-door by the Queen and her mother with every token of joy and affection. On the Monday, February 10th, 1840, there was "Queen's weather" for the two processions to the Chapel Royal, St. James's, where the wedding took place.

The bride and bridegroom immediately went to Windsor for a few days, and on their return the look of perfect peace, happiness, and confidence which had settled on the face of the young Queen was at once remarked by her ladies.

CHAPTER IV.

DOMESTIC LIFE.

1840.

Prince Albert's illusions — Impressions of his elder brother—His departure—Confusion and extravagance in the royal household—The Baroness Lehzen—The Prince's dislike of London—His depression—The English Sunday—The Queen's affection for the Whigs—The Prince becomes Keeper of the Privy Purse—His day—His religious views.

THE young bridegroom had come to England with few illusions. He knew that duty destined him to a laborious, restrained life, not for his own glory. He must efface himself from the first, devoting himself in the first flush of manhood to guarded habits of moderation, and a tedious routine of business and representation, sedulously renouncing all prominence and willingly embracing this irksome position with no hope of fame or gratitude, but for the faithful love of one woman, and for the higher purpose of effecting great and lasting good.

His father returned to Coburg immediately after the wedding, but Prince Ernest remained for three months in England, and thus he says:—

"became a witness to the daily increasing mutual understanding of the young couple, in both of whom the art of yielding the will to one another was not easy, on account of the strongly marked individuality of their characters. I could, however, already perceive the germ of the perfect accordance which afterwards subsisted between them. In my correspondence with my uncle at Brussels, I described the joys and griefs of this process of the heart so intuitively and thoroughly, that Baron Stockmar let himself be betrayed into the exclamation, after a humorous description of this kind, 'All well and true!' In fact, I was convinced that what my brother achieved as a bridegroom would not fail him as a husband. 'Victoria,' I could write on the 2nd of March, 'remains very consistent with herself. She is a loving, attentive and especially tender wife to Albert, and tries to guess his least wishes.'

"For my own part, my stay at the English Court afforded me many experiences, so that I was able much better to understand English life and character. Indeed, the peculiarities of English society found from the first more sympathy in me than in my brother. The passion of the high nobility for every kind of sport found more echo and comprehension in me than in him, and thus I gained fuller access to the Englishman's reserved heart. I will not decide whether Prince Albert ever was able to strike the true chord in his dealings with the nation. I had many an argument with him on the subject in all affection, and always felt that his was a hard lot in having to live in harmonious intelligence with the great island race.

"On the last day of our being together we were riding, and Albert was making striking and clever remarks after his wont on all about us, he suddenly gave a deep sigh, and said, 'When you are gone, I shall have no one to exchange an unrestrained word with about these things. An Englishman does not understand or enter into such matters, and would only see the foreigner's love of fault-finding.'"

Mr. Anson's small liking for Germans as a class perhaps added to the difficulty, and the Prince had

likewise a private secretary for his German correspondence. He was:—

"A certain Professor Schenk," says the Duke, "who once had given us brothers instruction in English, and had afterwards been Secretary to the Duchess of Kent, a worthy man, but with all the failings of a German Philistine," and thus another mistake was made in the choice of attendants. 'Thus,' he adds, 'the situation of my brother in England was a very difficult one, and I must fully declare that, in a peculiar sense of the word, he was the framer of his own good fortune.'"—(*Seines Gluches Schmidt.*)

Thus, with a somewhat heavy heart, Prince Ernest quitted his brother to pay a visit to Lisbon, where his cousin, Ferdinand, occupied the same position as Consort to Queen Maria De Gloria. The two brothers sang together a German poem called "*Abschied*" (parting), in which the German students are wont to take leave of each other at the break up of their University course; and after their last embrace, Prince Albert, his wife's journal records, looked as white as a sheet, and presently said, "Such things are hard to bear."

Not only was Prince Ernest his other self from his infancy, but he was the only thorough intimate being with whom he could speak with the mutual understanding of perfect equality. And, with an ever-mastering love of order, here was the Prince, as he said, "Husband but not master, and in one of the most uncomfortable households in existence, practically under no one's authority."

The domestic establishment was divided between great

officers of state, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Steward, and the Master of the Horse, one or other of whom hired all the servants, gave the orders and provided for the expenses; but their duties were so curiously apportioned that while the Lord Steward was answerable for the laying of the fires and for their fuel, it was the Lord Chamberlain who had the right of kindling them, and in the same way the lamps were provided by the one and lighted by the other. A cupboard door could not be mended without so much red-tape that the preliminaries lasted for months, and a broken window was worse, for the outside of the palaces belonged to the department of the Master of the Horse, and the grounds to the Woods and Forests. The maids were under the Chamberlain, the footmen under the Master of the Horse, the cooks under the Lord Steward. Moreover, these higher offices are the prescriptive right of adherents of the reigning Ministry, who can be useful supporters though scarcely statesmen. They appeared on great occasions, were displaced on every change of Government, and were never supposed to exert themselves practically in their charges, nor to exercise any authority over the servants hired in their names, and paid out of their salaries; nor did they authorise any deputy to represent them in the household.

The extravagance and confusion could not be otherwise than dreadful, and therewith the discomfort. The ser-

vants went out and came in at their pleasure, and guests sometimes had no one to announce them or usher them to their rooms. They thus were left to wander about the corridors in search of their bedrooms, and at Windsor it once happened to M. Guizot to look in upon Her Majesty herself in the midst of her toilette for the night! That there might be actual danger to the Royal person in such a state of things there could be no doubt, when a year later the "boy Jones" (called by the wits In-I-go Jones) was dragged out from under a sofa in the room adjoining that of the Queen and her fortnight-old daughter. He was unarmed and harmless, but what was possible to him was likewise possible to the semi-lunatics who had the strange mania of attempting the life of the Sovereign.

And the attempts of the Prince at remonstrance were at first looked on as the mere meddlesomeness of a foreigner, ignorant of British rights. Even in the interior of his home there were difficulties. The Duchess of Kent had prudently retired to Frogmore when no longer needed as her daughter's chaperon, but the Baroness Lehzen remained. She had been the Queen's governess, and a very excellent and conscientious one she was; her pupil was warmly attached to her, and had made her keeper of the privy purse, secretary in her own more personal correspondence, and manager of the very few domestic matters not absorbed by the Officers of State.

And thus the Prince found himself at first a mere cypher, a sort of appendage to his wife, in the midst of much that was painful to every sense, and without authority to remedy matters. All the lively equal intercourse with his relations was at an end, and he felt himself obliged to be so guarded and restrained in manner that an impression of his haughtiness began to prevail. Moreover, the smoke-laden atmosphere of London was oppressive to his head and lungs.

"Now I am free! now I can breathe!" he used to exclaim, when he could escape to Claremont or Windsor. "I feel as if in Paradise," he wrote to his stepmother, from Windsor, "in this fine, fresh air, instead of the close, coal-laden smoke of London. The thick, heavy atmosphere there quite weighs one down. The town is also so large, that without a long ride or walk, you have no chance of getting out of it. Besides this, whenever I show myself, I am still followed by hundreds of people."

And at this period, though she was entirely weaned from it afterwards, the Queen greatly preferred a residence in London as more lively, in spite of the headaches the air likewise gave her.

The Duke of Coburg allows us to see that his brother was far from happy in these earlier days, though he seems not to have allowed the Queen to perceive his depression, and to have borne in mind that "all cometh to him who knoweth how to wait."

"I endeavour to be of as much use to Victoria as I can," he wrote, and this was the keynote of his life

especially in these trying days, when Lady Lyttelton writes:—

"From an open window below this floor began suddenly to sound the Prince's organ, expressively played by his masterly hand. Such a modulation! Minor and solemn, and ever changing, and never ceasing. From a piano, like Jenny Lind's swelling note, up to the fullest swell, and still the same fine vein of melancholy! And it came on so exactly as an accompaniment to the sunset. How strange he is! He must have been playing while the Queen was finishing her toilet. And then he went to cut jokes and eat dinner, and no one but the organ knows what is in him!"

The English Sunday was a trial to him. Three years later, Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (then Archdeacon) records in his diary of March 6th, 1843, after having refused to play at chess with the Prince on Sunday:—

"After breakfast, with the Prince for three quarters of an hour. Talk about Sunday. Told him that I thought the *Book of Sports* did more than almost anything to shock the English mind, &c. He urged English want of amusements for common people of an innocent class. No *gardens*. In Coburg, with 10,000 inhabitants, thirty-two gardens frequented by different sorts of people, who meet and associate in them. 'I never heard a real *shout* in England. All my German servants marry because they say it is so dull here; nothing to interest—good living, good wine, but there is nothing to do but to turn rogue or marry.'"

Though a good deal of this weariness was the foreign want of appreciation of "Merry England," yet it took some principle not "to turn rogue." The English want of outward demonstration, and of that genial sympathy which was possible in a small population, with a paternal court and a territory like an estate, could not but be

missed, and of course was hardly possible in a huge capital of mixed population like London.* Nor had that affection been then won which has since been gained. The respect and confidence of fifty years could not be the same with the romance with which the young maiden and bride was regarded. Her two predecessors had lessened the loyalty her grandfather had well merited, and she was besides in the hands of a moribund Ministry, kept in office by a mistake on her part.

She had come to the throne under a Whig Government, and imbibing their views, was alienated from the Conservatives. Prince Albert came with the determination to stand free from all party politics, and Lord Melbourne told him at once that this was the only right course, and that the time was come "for a general amnesty for the Tories." The old statesman, inevitably retiring for the last time, really loved his young mistress, saw that the pendulum must swing back, and tried to prepare her by saying, "You must hold out the olive branch a little."

However, for the present, politics continued in the same condition, and in the meantime the Prince was diligently preparing for future usefulness by reading law with the distinguished barrister, Mr. Selwyn, and by taking every opportunity of joining his regiment of Life Guards on parade in the park at Windsor so as

to learn the words of command, and understand military manœuvres.

As his influence increased, he prevailed on the Queen to give up the late hours which tried him so much. She owns in her memoirs how much benefit she obtained from the change. Another step in needful authority was gained by the retirement of the Baroness Lehzen, when the Prince assumed her functions as Keeper of the Privy Purse, and assistant to the Queen in her correspondence. Not, however, till 1843, after the change to a Conservative Government, was it thought practicable to endeavour to put an end to the wasteful, uncomfortable and demoralizing condition of the royal household. Stockmar drew up a memorandum, humorous in its gravity, but the difficulty remained great, for neither party was willing to give up its patronage; but finally, after a few partial reforms had proved insufficient, the various great officers of the service agreed to delegate their powers to a single representative, who was amenable to the Prince, and from that time forward all was well ordered, and so economical as to be a marvel after the habitual lavishness of royal households. Kindness and conscientiousness towards dependents and servants were deeply rooted in the nature of both the Queen and Prince, and were rewarded by long and affectionate service. It is remembered that, however busy the Prince might be, he would always wait and give his whole

attention in the most friendly manner when a domestic question was brought before him.

The economy thus exercised enabled the Queen to entertain foreign Sovereigns as her guests without asking assistance from the country, and in course of time to purchase first Osborne and then Balmoral. The Prince, out of his own income, established model farms at Osborne and at Windsor, and actually made them profitable; besides, the breeds of cattle which he introduced had an important effect in improving those of the country in general.

The Prince's day at Buckingham Palace and at Windsor was in general mapped out as follows during the years of his married life. He rose between six and seven, attended to his correspondence till nearly nine, when he, who once had never willingly touched a newspaper, looked through all the principal papers, and gave a summary of what was most important to the Queen. As children were born to them, this became a time for seeing and playing with the little ones, and throughout all their occupations both father and mother superintended anxiously their education, alike religious and secular.

A Cabinet Council often succeeded, or at least a conference with one or other of the Ministers, for the despatch of business, overlooking of correspondence, or consultation on foreign policy, memorandums on his views

being often drawn up by the Prince. He then went out riding—if in London, to see any public buildings that were in hand; at Windsor, in the season, for a couple of hours shooting. He was wont to say that he could not understand men devoting a whole day to sport, instead of taking it as a brief recreation, not perhaps understanding that those who are not princes can hardly call out all the paraphernalia of "*la chasse*" except for a full day. His want of sympathy for field sports was one of the bars against perfect understanding with the English aristocracy. He generally came home at a great pace from his rides, passing through the Queen's sitting-room with a bright word about his doings, and then making himself ready for luncheon, after which he accompanied the Queen in her walks, rides, or drives, then read, wrote, or had interviews with various visitors till dinner time, when there was either a social evening, or a visit to one of the theatres.

At Osborne and Balmoral it was holiday time, more hours were spent out of doors, and more given to his children, on whose minds he left a deep impression, as may be seen in the letters of Princess Alice. He was always a deeply religious man, with the strongest sense of principle and duty; but, from his German education, his views were naturally of the cast termed broad, and from first to last he never really understood the English Church, though he evidently loved and admired her

Liturgy, and missed it in his own country. His turn for art and music made him ready to enhance the beauty of her services, and he was always deeply reverent and full of personal devotion and conscientiousness; but he was always inclined to fusion at the expense of dogma, and resented any resistance to error as narrowness and illiberality.

It was unfortunate, too, that his confidence in Bishop Samuel Wilberforce was overthrown by the Hampden case. It is now known that the Bishop protested hastily against Dr. Hampden's appointment, on the authority of others, and withdrew his opposition on personally examining the writings; but the change naturally appeared to have other motives, and was thus even more damaging in Prince Albert's eyes than the first protest.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PEEL MINISTRY.

1841-1846.

The position of the Whig Ministry—The Regency Question—The Syrian complication—Arrangement of the Bed chamber difficulty—Fall of the Whigs—Lord Melbourne and Sir Robert Peel on the Prince's abilities—The Fine Arts Commission—Birth and baptism of the Prince of Wales—Marriage of the Duke of Coburg—Fancy ball at Buckingham Palace—Abolition of the duel—Attempts on the Queen's life—Visit to Louis Philippe—The agreement of Eu—Death of the Prince's father—A sketch of the Prince and Stockmar—The Czar's visit—Arrival of Louis Philippe—The Royal Consort discussion—Visit to Coburg—The potato famine and its consequences—The Ministerial crisis—Lord George Bentinck's attack on the Prince—Fall of Peel's Ministry—Count Vizthum's sketch of the Prince—Ecclesiastical affairs.

ONE of the disadvantages of the outset of Prince Albert's position in England was, that the wedding had taken place under the auspices of a Ministry whose position had become untenable, and who were only holding their position through a species of mistake. The Government, whom the Queen had, as it were, inherited from her uncle, placed in opposition the party who were the

natural defenders of the Crown on principle; and, at the same time, Lord Melbourne, an elderly man, left with no immediate family, had been so kind and fatherly to the young maiden when initiating her into the first duties of her office, that she looked up to him with great trust and affection, and was unwilling to part from him. There was, likewise, natural annoyance with the Tories for the opposition to the Prince's position and to his pension. However, when it became expedient to contemplate the necessity of a Regency, in the contingency of an infant Sovereign being left motherless, no one attempted to prevent the designation of Prince Albert, except the Duke of Sussex, who thought it due to the House of Brunswick to assert the claims of himself and his brothers as native-born English princes. Happily, the Regent never was required; the nine children of the Queen and Prince were born in due season, in all safety, the eldest on November 21st, 1840. The Queen had playfully said the name ought to be Turko-Egypto, so full were the minds of herself and the Prince of the vexed question of Egypt, that servant of nations, which had become all-important to England ever since the so-called Overland Route had rendered it the highway to India. Mehemet Ali Pasha, with the connivance of France, was showing himself dangerous to the power of his suzerain, Abdul Medjid, and the English fleet had been

forced to interfere on behalf of the Sultan, and take Beyrout from the Egyptians.

At this the French took great umbrage, and war was threatened, but was averted by the courage and resource of Lord Palmerston.

French vanity was gratified, and attention called away from Egypt, by the translation of the remains of Napoleon I. from his lonely grave beneath the willows of St. Helena to the magnificent cenotaph in course of preparation for him at the Church of the Invalides. What was meant to foster national pride and patriotism proved to be, in truth, an aliment to Bonapartism.

When the new Session of Parliament began, the fall of the Ministry was plainly imminent. Lord Melbourne, tired of his position, but truly attached to the Queen, talked over the situation with the Prince, who had forced himself out of his youthful distaste to politics, and was gathering information impartially. One of his special objects was, as he told Stockmar, that nothing unconstitutional should be done, and that the Queen should come out of the crisis this time with more *éclat* than she had done on a previous occasion. A husband could say what no other man could say to his Sovereign, and explain that private friendships must not interfere with public interests. Moreover, as a wife, she was far less dependent for happiness on her ladies than previously, in the loneliness of her throne. Sir Robert Peel also

made known how much less were the changes he desired than she had apprehended, when she fancied all the familiar faces were to be expelled. Meantime, a vote of want of confidence left the Government in a majority of one. A Dissolution followed, and brought in so distinctly Conservative a majority that the Ministry had no alternative but resignation. And, as had been already determined, three ladies—the Duchesses of Bedford and Sutherland, and the Marchioness of Normanby—gave up their posts at the same time, not without tears on the part of their royal mistress, who could, however, keep up her affectionate intercourse with them in private.

Lord Melbourne, on his last interview as Premier with the Queen, told her, "You will find great support in the Prince, he is so able." And the day after he wrote to her—

"Lord Melbourne has formed the highest opinion of his Royal Highness's judgment, temper and discretion, and he cannot but feel a great consideration and security in the reflection that he is leaving your Majesty in a situation in which your Majesty has the inestimable advantage of such advice and assistance."

The Queen complained of Peel being so shy that it made her shy, and Mr. Greville advised Sir Robert to approach the Prince on the common ground of arts, literature and tastes. Intimacy and mutual esteem soon grew up. Sir Robert Peel said to Mr. Pemberton, Attorney-General for the Duchy of Cornwall, that:—

"I should find in him one of the most extraordinary young men I had ever met. So it proved. His aptitude for business was wonderful; the dullest and most intricate matters did not escape or weary his attention, his judgment was very good, his readiness to listen to any suggestions, though against his own opinions, was constant, and though I saw his temper often tried, yet in the course of twenty years I never once saw it disturbed, nor witnessed any signs of impatience."

Intercourse with a premier was never again so close and intimate as it had been during the four years, during which the young Queen regarded Lord Melbourne as her chief director; but Sir Robert Peel, a highly-cultivated man of great conscientiousness and courtesy, as well as of artistic tastes, proved a congenial spirit to the royal pair. He said afterwards, that recollecting his own share in the curtailment of Prince Albert's income, he expected the introduction with some embarrassment, but was instantly set at ease by the frank and friendly manner with which he was met.

One of his first measures was to propose to place the Prince at the head of a Royal Commission, to enquire whether the re-building of the Houses of Parliament did not afford an opportunity for the encouragement of the Fine Arts in England. The Prince was well pleased, but stipulated that the appointment should be absolutely unconnected with party views, and recommended that they should exclude artists, so as to give greater freedom of consideration. It was really the Prince's first initiation into public life, bringing him into connection with the

leading men of the country, and he always declared it taught him more than anything else had done. He prepared his opening speech as chairman with great care, though it was not his first English speech. *That*, more than a year before, he had previously rehearsed in private to the Queen, that she might correct any mistakes in accent or idiom.

He threw himself into the whole work with the thoroughness of one who seemed to have made his motto, "Be not ignorant of anything, in a great matter or a small." "He talked so naturally and argued so fairly," said Sir Charles Eastlake, "that two or three times I quite forgot who he was."

And when it was proposed that Germans should be employed on the frescoes, their work at Munich being much admired, the Prince gratified his auditors by saying, that in all that related to practical dexterity, the English were particularly skilful. "Even to the varnish on coaches, it is surprising how much more perfect the English practice is than that which one sees on the Continent."

On November 9th, 1841, was born the heir of the kingdom, by birth Duke of Cornwall, by creation Prince of Wales. While the Queen was laid up, all the boxes from the Foreign Office were sent with their keys, for the Prince to deal with, as indeed the guidance of our foreign policy was his special care, and on this one occasion, he

began to show the hand that moved. It was decided to request the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV., to become sponsor, as the principal Protestant sovereign in Europe, and likewise one who took an ardent interest in religious subjects, though his measures, such as the attempted fusion of Lutherans and Calvinists in his dominions, were not always as well judged as they were well intentioned. The choice was not quite popular. English High Churchmen disapproved of a godfather not belonging to the Anglican Church, and dreaded attempts of the same kind as had been made in Prussia, and the Prussians themselves feared an endeavour to introduce Anglicanism. Baron Bunsen, the trusted minister and ambassador of Prussia, had an English wife, and was on friendly terms with both Royal Families, and this increased the alarm.

The other Continental powers dreaded some intrigue, but did not find their fears justified, though King Frederick William came in person to England. His visit was thoroughly enjoyed by both himself and his hosts, and the christening which took place on January 25th, was conducted with much reverence. There was a full choral service, and Prince Albert's good taste was shown, for when a new anthem was offered to him for the conclusion of the service, he said, "No. If the service ends with an anthem, we shall all go out criticising the music. We will have something we all know—something in which we

can all join, something devotional. The 'Hallelujah Chorus,' we shall all join in that with all our hearts."

The King formed a strong friendship with both the Queen and her husband. He remained long enough to see her open Parliament, and as his Minister afterwards wrote to Stockmar, always thought with pleasure "of that never to be forgotten time."

Prince Albert's only brother was about to marry the Princess Alexandrine of Baden, and it was a great disappointment to both brothers, that in the anxious state of affairs in England, with a terrible deficit in the revenue, disturbances in the pottery and iron districts, and wars impending in Afghanistan and China, Prince Albert felt that he could not be absent from the Queen's side. As a compensation, the bride and bridegroom were invited to make their wedding trip to England, and accordingly they came in July.

It was a trying moment, with such a deficiency of revenue, that the income tax was for the first time imposed since the war, the Queen and Prince endeavouring to render it less unpalatable by subjecting their own property to its operation. In all this, the Prince worked heartily with the Ministry, and in order to stimulate trade in its depressed condition, invitations were issued for a magnificent fancy ball at Buckingham Palace, where everyone was to appear in British manufactures, the royal pair themselves as Edward III. and Philippa,

the first great promoters of the English loom — but unluckily also the conquerors of France, so that a great ferment arose at Paris at a report that King John of France was to figure there in chains!

Indeed the entertainment was given with sorrowful hearts, for just then had been received the tidings of the massacre in the Khyber Pass, the first disaster to British arms that had occurred since the American War of Independence, and there were months of much anxiety before the misfortune was in any way retrieved; but it drew the Prince's attention to military matters, and in the great Duke of Wellington he found one who, to a certain extent, would attend to his suggestions. The first step taken, however, was one which savoured more of principle than of expediency, and which was doubly remarkable as coming from a young man of foreign birth and breeding, namely the putting an end to the system of avenging insulted honour by a challenge to mortal combat; a custom which had perhaps been almost needful as a protection in the ages of barbarism and violence, but which had since become an abuse. The man who refused or avoided a duel was branded as a coward, and the unwritten code of every army forced him to resign his commission, or, if a civilian, society turned its back on him. The penalties of the law, which treated the death or other injuries inflicted like any other act of violence,

were so eluded as to be of little effect; and it was virtually in the power of a bad man so to force a duel on an inoffensive person as to leave him no alternative between fighting and contumely. Moreover, the disuse of the rapier, and adoption of pistols, had greatly added to the chances of a fatal issue.

Monarchs and statesmen had endeavoured to prevent the custom, but in vain; though in England religious opinions had done something, and a feeling among the more reasonable part of the community had arisen that there was true moral courage in avoiding the possibility of becoming a murderer. The Prince felt enabled to take the initiative, and consulted the Duke of Wellington, who had thought over the question and at first doubted the possibility of interference, though he undertook to enquire into the working of the Courts of Honour that existed in Bavaria.

Other old officers feared that quarrels might rankle if there were no such mode of settlement, and there would be no restraint on practical jokes, or on rudenesses to ladies of which the law could not take notice, but which their male relations were expected to avenge. The Prince, after all this had been brought before him, wrote an excellent letter to the Duke:—

"Honour," said he, "abstractedly taken is invulnerable. It is a treasure that nobody can take from us. . . . . But there is an honour

based on the opinion of the world, and therefore dependant upon others. The person whose honour (in this sense of the word) has been injured must have a remedy by which he can recover the treasure taken from him. . . . . It is therefore from a sense of justice that it becomes necessary to consider what other remedy should be granted if the only one at present acknowledged is to be prosecuted with all severity."

The wish of the Prince was for a Court of Honour, but this was finally decided to be impracticable, and the following declaration was added to the Articles of War, that it is "suitable to the character of honourable men to apologise and offer redress for wrong or insult committed, and equally so for the party aggrieved to accept frankly and cordially explanation and apologies for the same."

This practically extinguished the system, and though some foolish and impudent acts are sometimes committed by those who are base enough to take advantage of their impunity, the cessation has proved to be a most beneficial relief from the oppression of a barbarous custom.

It was also found that the treating of men possessed of that mania for notoriety which made them threaten the sovereign's life, as either crazy or guilty of treason, only served to encourage others.

A deformed man actually attempted another personal attack on the Queen that same summer. Sir Robert Peel felt the horror of it so much that when, as he was consulting with the Prince, the Queen suddenly entered

the room, he was overcome even to tears. It was decided to make a good flogging and eighteen months' imprisonment the punishment, and this almost put a stop to these acts of violence.

The scheme for the summer had been to visit King Leopold, and at his court meet some of the members of the French royal family, the Duchess of Orleans being a cousin of Prince Albert; but this plan was prevented by the melancholy accident which caused the death of the Duke of Orleans, and a voyage to Scotland was chosen instead, the first of many visits which were the great delight and relaxation from the tread-mill of cares and state. The scenery, the historical traditions, the romance which seems crystallized in the crags and castles—the hearty homely people—delighted the Prince; and at Edinburgh, all the time he could spare from public ceremonies was devoted to visiting the museums and other literary and scientific institutions, where his intelligence and knowledge were an equal surprise and delight to professors, only too much used to careless and weary visitors. Of the ornithological collection he shewed an especial knowledge, formed no doubt on his own little museum at Rosenau. "The people," wrote Mr. Anson, "look on him as the great patron of all arts and sciences." Testimonies of appreciation were all the more welcome to him as he always feared that he was considered as an alien. He

copied and sent to Mr. Anson the sentence in Hallam's *Constitutional History*, where, with regard to William III., the expression is used, "his foreign origin, always a crime in English eyes," though he declared that he had never personally met with anything but kindness.

The ministers knew by that time they might rely on him. Lord Aberdeen told Stockmar how satisfactory it was to see the Queen leaning on his judgment, and how gently he exercised his authority, never giving a decided opinion on any point without first consulting the Queen. Stockmar's own description runs: "There is in him a practical talent, by means of which he, in a moment, seizes what is really important in any matter, drives his talons into it, like a vulture into his prey, and flies off with it to his nest."

While these consultations were pending, the Princess Alice was born on April 25th, 1843, and in August the long projected visit to the French royal family took place, who received the Queen at the Château d'Eu. Louis Philippe had been a great friend of the Duke of Kent; his daughter, the Queen of the Belgians, was much beloved by Queen Victoria; the widowed Duchess of Orleans was a cousin of Prince Albert's, and there was strong family feeling to make the meeting both affectionate and joyous. The Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Aberdeen, accompanied the Queen, but the only political question touched upon was the marriage of

the two young Spanish princesses, Queen Isabella and her sister Louisa. Prince Albert recorded in a letter to Stockmar, "the declaration of Louis Philippe to Aberdeen, that he would not give his son to Spain even if he were asked: and Aberdeen's answer that, excepting one of his sons, any aspirant whom Spain might choose would be acceptable to England."

This related to Isabella herself, and the French were equally afraid of her espousing one of the Coburg princes, as the Portuguese Queen, Maria de Gloria, had actually done. The bestowal of the Infanta was also to be considered, and the conclusion was that the two governments would approve of the Queen's marriage to one of the princes of her own family, but that no son of Louis Philippe should marry her sister, until the chances of the Infanta's succession to the throne were removed by heirs being born to the Queen. All then seemed satisfactorily arranged so as to prevent either power from acquiring too great a preponderance in the Peninsula. Louis Philippe told the Prince that his family felt as if they had been placed under a ban and treated like lepers by all Europe, and expelled from the society of reigning houses; and they therefore rated very highly the visit of the most powerful sovereign in Europe.

On the morning of January 29th, 1844, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg died almost suddenly, at sixty years

of age. He had been greatly beloved and honoured by both his sons, and the blow fell very heavily upon them. It was an additional trouble in Prince Albert's grief that no one in England outside his immediate family could be expected to share in the sorrow for a German Prince almost unknown.

"Here we sit together," he writes, "poor Mama, Victoria and myself, and weep, with a great, cold public around us, insensible as stone. To have some sympathetic friends at hand would be a great solace. . . . . With him it is well. I share your belief that his would have been a dreary old age, and even were not my faith strong in the Providence which shapes all things for our good, I should find consolation in this. Still, for us the loss is terrible. The parent stem has been levelled by the storm, and the branches which are scattered all over the world must now strike separate roots for themselves. May love, friendship, harmony, keep them all together."

The presence of the Prince was required in Gotha, and leaving the Queen of the Belgians as a companion to his wife in this their first separation, he went to his brother during the Easter recess of Parliament. He arrived at Gotha on March 31st, to be greeted by his brother and their step-mother and grandmother. It was a time of much and deep consideration, and the elder brother takes the opportunity of drawing a portrait of his brother, which we here translate :—

"When all are dead who knew Prince Albert, any person attempting to depict him merely from his letters and official speeches and writings, would be only able to give a one-sided representation of his very superior but very peculiar nature. No one would—even from the evidence now held as most conclusive—form an idea of the almost marvellous contrasts that slumbered in his nature, or the

contradictions contending against each other in his upright spirit. His gentle amiability was really coupled with such a critical sternness as to be almost a psychological riddle. The great self-sacrificing affection sometimes was changed into painful coldness, and he was often on the borders of that dangerous temptation to those in powerful and exalted positions, of imputing views and motives suggested by contempt of mankind. Yet never in my life have I met with anyone who had so pure a sympathy for humanity in the abstract. All that is beautiful and noble which is expressed by the term 'a philanthropic soul' was always at work in him. It was his perpetual thought how to make men happy, and yet he could be very hard on an individual man. Then his keen, logical understanding came into full play, and with unmerciful argument he pulled to pieces other people's opinions and actions. It was as if the whole rich music of his heart tones, like that of an organ, had been shut up at a single touch. But if he was a ruthless critic, alike in politics, art and science, no friend who knew him well could fail to perceive the deep sources of his judgments formed by acute reflection.

"He was by nature the foe of all half-truths, a despiser of falsehoods, a persecutor of conventional phrases, and as the weakness of men and their doings came more sharply and strongly before his judgment than it did to others, the battle of life rendered him more severe and opinionative in his conclusions. As he became more wrapped up in his own doctrines, he lost much of his natural cheerfulness, and pleasure in his own vocations.

"I am far from maintaining that it was by English life and manners that my brother's nobly-framed nature became morbid with 'the pale cast of thought,' but a passage in a letter to King Leopold, in connection with a different subject, and spoken generally, illustrates what I mean. 'An Englishman does not know what to be *froh* means. When they laugh, it is to see a fellow-citizen torn to pieces. If there is a *fête*, it is so much trouble; and if it turns out tolerable, they always say, 'It went off very well,' as if a task was over. In America it is said to be worse, for a mirthful man is a rarity. It is a question whether a small portion of the aim of life should not be afforded to avoid wasting this gift of Heaven in needless unpleasantness."

Some of this impression is of course owing to that

foreign incapacity for understanding us, which made Commines long ago say, that the English enjoyed themselves sadly, even while we knew our country as "merry England;" something also to the earnestness, good or bad, which always underlies our playfulness, and a good deal to the mutual action of the English on the Prince, and of the Prince on the English, which froze up all geniality and freedom in their intercourse. We must confess this, even while we own that his influence did much towards the institution of those more innocent recreations that he desired for us. And the Duke adds, while doing full justice to Stockmar's faithfulness, wisdom and general excellence, that there was something in the Baron's influence that assisted in producing this tone of depression, and craving for the sympathy of mutual comprehension. "He was a faithful comrade, like the chorus in a Greek tragedy, but he could never have been a responsible servant to withstand any action of his master, or to combat for the sake of his own ideas," and thus "with much loftiness of thought in Stockmar's circle, there was also engendered a narrowness of spirit (*Kasten Geist*) almost leading to claims of infallibility."

There is a key to a great deal in these shrewd observations by one who thoroughly knew both Prince Albert and Stockmar.

The stay in Germany was short, and the Prince

returned in time for the reception of a most unexpected visit from the Tzar, Nicholas I., who came with only two days' notice, at a very inopportune moment, when the Court was in deep mourning, though there was plenty of popular enthusiasm for so distinguished a guest, looking as he did every inch a king, and with more inches than most kings.

He had been in England a good many years before, as Grand Duke, and his object in now coming thither was, no doubt, to discover the intentions of England with regard to Turkey. Ever since the Russian power had become an Empire, there had been a longing to absorb Turkey. This was ambitious and political, as regarded the possession of the great ports communicating with the Mediterranean Sea, and also religious in the desire to drive Mahometanism out of Europe, and re-establish Christianity at Constantinople. There can be little doubt that Nicholas was bent on discovering what would be the line likely to be taken by England in case of any attack upon the Ottoman power, which he conceived to be rapidly on the way to ruin. He was a man with many elements of greatness, of magnificent stature, and noble countenance, he and his sister being—it was said—the handsomest man and woman in Europe, but he was a thorough autocrat, keeping down discontent and rebellion with an iron heel, and he could not brook opposition. He expected to win over the English to his

interests by personal contact, and thus, when the opportunity served, to induce them to join in the dismemberment of Turkey; but he could obtain no assurance such as could induce him to detail the whole of his plans. The Prince, Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, all answered in the same sense, but very cautiously; and Nicholas was so much struck by the ability of the first mentioned, as to tell Lord Aberdeen that he wished Prince Albert were his own son. In conversation he paid the compliment of hoping that they might meet on a battle-field on the same side. The Prince was about to express a hope that there would be no battle-fields, but checked himself lest he should seem to imply condemnation of the Russian policy.

Windsor, Eton, a grand review, and the Ascot races, were all admired by the visitor, and though a certain, "almost savage" expression about the eyes was observed at times, there remained much admiration and even affectionate sympathy for him, a feeling that he acted from principles of duty, that "his immense power weighed heavily upon him," and that he thought himself extremely just while he was kept in ignorance of the corruption, oppression and misery under him.

The next sovereign who visited Windsor was Louis Philippe, the first French King who had ever been in England, except King John. He came as a friend, and as one who already knew England well, having taken

refuge there during the Great Revolution. He enjoyed going to Twickenham, where he had lived for five years, and had much familiar conversation with his hosts. His opinion of the Prince, given to the Queen, must be recorded :—

"Oh! he will do wonders; he is so wise, he is not in a hurry, he gains so much by being known. He will always give you good advice. Do not think I say so in flattery. No! no! It is from my heart. He will be like his uncle, equally wise and good. That is what I have just been writing to my good Louise. He will be of the greatest use to you, and will keep well at your side if a time of vicissitudes should come—such as I hope may never be—but, after all, no one can tell."

This impression was always made on those who came into close communication with the Prince. Many testimonies have since come to light. Disraeli noted that he had been highly educated, but not beyond his capacity—a sagacious remark, since the cultivation of those marked for a high position is not at all inapt to be carried beyond the powers of their intellect and character. But Prince Albert's native ability was fully able to profit by and keep in due proportion to practical life whatever he studied. Samuel Wilberforce (afterwards Bishop of Oxford and of Winchester), and Field-Marshal Lord Seaton, both declared him one of the cleverest men they had ever conversed with; and Lord Ashley (Earl of Shaftesbury) found him thoroughly able to comprehend and sympathise with beneficent schemes

for diminishing the oppressions of labour. Few characters could bear closer inspection, but publicity was a great trial to him. Once, when driving with the Duke of Bedford, to shoot at Bagshot, he complained much of the manner in which all proceedings and motions of the Court were publicly discussed, saying that on the Continent the Government knew by its secret agents what the people were about, but here they knew nothing about other people's affairs, and everybody knew about theirs; that whatever they did or were about to do was known.

He might have complained with justice that people thought they knew a good deal more than was true, and grumbled accordingly. Yet the entertainment of the Russian and French monarchs had been carried on, as Sir Robert Peel said in his speech, "without adding one tittle to the burdens of the country. And I am not required," he continued, "on the part of her Majesty to press for the extra expenditure of one single shilling on account of these unforeseen causes of increased expenditure. I think that to state this is only due to the personal credit of her Majesty, who insists upon it that there shall be every magnificence required by her station, but without incurring a single debt."

The accomplishment of this noble economy was justly attributable to the Prince as head, and to Stockmar as hand. The year was most prosperous. The Income

Tax had enabled many duties to be diminished or to be taken off, and an increase in the naval and military force to be made; and it was hoped that in three years' time it might be altogether taken off. The Prince rejoiced, and while detailing the success to his friend, adds: "What elasticity in the resources of this great country, and of trade generally!"

Just at this time a report obtained currency that the Prince was to bear the title of King Consort. The Queen wished for it. "He ought to be, and really is above me in everything," were the words of this loving wife; "and therefore I wish that he should be equal in rank with me." Unknown to himself, she had discussed the matter with Stockmar, and caused him to enter on it, with Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen. All the three thought it would be a highly unadvisable step, and the idea was dropped; but enough of the discussion had leaked out to give grounds for a paragraph in the *Morning Chronicle* intimating that the title would probably be the preliminary to a demand for a larger income. The question whether this were the case was put to Sir Robert Peel in the House of Commons, and he declared the report to be wholly unfounded. Prince Albert himself wrote to his confidant:—

"The Royal Consort discussion was excessively unpleasant. . . . . The affair must have been a piece of Opposition tactics to squeeze Peel between Victoria and the public. He, too, was startled and

afraid the 'authority' might have emanated from the Court. I seized the opportunity to discuss the question with him thoroughly, and also that of the Commandership-in-Chief.

"With regard to the title, the upshot was that it is not titles that are esteemed here; that the public are inclined to attach ridicule to anything of the kind; that there is a lack of good precedents; that there are great Constitutional difficulties.

"In regard to the Commandership-in-Chief, it was that the army would be greatly pleased by it, that, politically, it would be the best arrangement; but that I should have to do the whole work myself, and must not delegate it to anyone else, if I am to be a real gainer by the appointment; that this would absorb all my time and attention, and it is a question whether it is right to sacrifice for such an offer the duties which I owe to Victoria and the children.

"Peel regards my present position as extremely good, and thinks that, all in all, the monarchy never stood so well. He says that, despite the encroachments of democracy, there was something (considering the sex of the Sovereign, the private character of the family, &c.) in the position that marked strongly on the feelings of the nation."

It is curious to recollect that it was generally believed that the old Duke only continued commander-in-chief to keep the Prince from the office. A cap for the soldiers, with a peak behind as well as in front, so as to keep the rain from their necks, was said to be devised by the Prince. It was not beautiful, and was much laughed at. Sir Robert Peel had become an intimate personal friend, as well as Lord Aberdeen, and it was with great pain that the royal pair heard his forebodings, that his liberal measures were dividing his own party, and that he should not long retain his majorities.

There was a lull at the Prorogation, and the Prince had the pleasure of taking his wife to see the haunts of his

childhood, and of showing her Germany for the first time. They were joined by the King and Queen of the Belgians, and the King and Queen of Prussia, and all ascended the Rhine together, from Cologne to Mayence, whence they drove to Coburg.

It was a real delight to the Queen, to be here welcomed as her Albert's wife, instead of his being only considered as her appendage. Her mother had preceded her, "the staircase was full of cousins," and all was joy except for the sorely missing of the father, who had been so much beloved.

Many old friends were assembled in Coburg and Gotha, such as the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden, and their son; and the admiration Prince Albert felt for the King of Prussia, Frederick William IV., was enhanced by all he saw and heard. The dream of his life, the union of Germany under Prussia as an Empire, began to develope itself more and more, amid all his intercourse with his relations, and the delight of introducing his wife to his native home.

Rosenau was especially delightful to the Queen, because the apartment which the two princes had occupied was (and still is) entirely unaltered. "It is," she wrote, quite in the roof, with a tiny little bed-room on each side, in one of which they both used to sleep with Florshutz their tutor. The view is beautiful, and the paper is full of holes from their fencing; and the very same table is

there on which they were dressed when they were little." Day after day went by in extreme enjoyment alike of the family meetings, the affection of the people, the unrestraint of the life, and the beautiful scenery, more delightful to the Prince from long association, and doubly charming to the Queen for his sake. That month of August was probably one of the happiest they ever spent. On the way home, there was a brief informal meeting at Tréport, with the French royal family, and the whole expedition was a perfect success.

But there was trouble lying in wait at home. The weather that had favoured the woodland drives and village festivities at Coburg, was helping to foster the disease that was destroying the potato crops, and bringing on distress in England and famine in Ireland. Potatoes had within the last century become the poor man's root. The Irish lived almost wholly on the "pratie," and the English labourer supplemented the bread, which was the staple food of his family, with potatoes from his garden or allotment ground. Poor soil was no drawback, and the crop had hitherto been a certainty, so that when the sickly smell of the plants was followed by the withering of the haulm and the rotting of the tuber, almost universally, it was, as it were, a proclamation of famine.

To lower the price of corn was the only means of relieving distress; and thus was suddenly accomplished

that which had been the aim of the Liberal party for many years back. The Anti Corn-Law League under the guidance of Cobden and Bright, had been gaining strength year after year, and louder and louder rang their denunciation of the duties, which protected British agriculture from being swamped by the importation of foreign-grown corn.

Peel, though hitherto Conservative, believed that the measure would have to be granted. All were agreed that in the present emergency, the ports must be thrown open, and corn admitted free of duty. Peel would have done so by an order of Council, but he owned himself convinced that the duty could never again be imposed, and his Protectionest colleagues would not go along with him; and while this was under consideration, a letter appeared from Lord John Russell, who, as a Whig, had been in favour of a moderate duty, now taking the entire repeal of the Corn Laws as part of the policy of his own party.

It was a complication in which Peel felt bound to resign, and accordingly Lord John Russell was summoned to form an administration; but there were unmanageable elements to combine, and he gave up the attempt. Sir Robert Peel then had to return to the helm, and carry through the measure, supported by the warm admiration and gratitude of the Queen and Prince, but knowing that he was splitting up the party which had brought him into

power, and incurring the strong indignation of his most esteemed friends, as a recreant to their cause.

The Prince was much relieved. "We are in high glee," he wrote, "having survived a Ministerial crisis of fourteen days' duration, and are now standing exactly where we did before, upon our feet; whereas, during the crisis, we were very nearly standing on our heads."

But for the sudden requirements of the famine, it was believed by Peel and Aberdeen that they should have carried their party gradually along with them; and as it was, all the Cabinet was retained, except Lord Stanley. In this crisis the Queen received credit from all parties for impartiality and freedom from party spirit, and the Prince, rejoicing in the testimony, observed: "To my mind, the exaltation of Royalty is possible only through the personal character of the Sovereign. When a person enjoys complete confidence, we desire for him more power and influence in the conduct of affairs; but confidence is of slow growth." The Duke of Wellington, though greatly averse to the Repeal, decided that "he must stick to the country and the Queen;" but the greater number of the old Tories were bitterly grieved and incensed, full of forebodings which, though slow of accomplishment, have been only too well fulfilled, of the depreciation of English land, and the decay of her food-producing powers.

So the year 1846 came in sadly. There was hardly

a sound potato in the English market, Ireland was absolutely starving, every English cottager was straitened, and wages were terribly low; so that the loss of the food that had been grown without expense made the cry loud and imperative for lowering the price of bread.

The Queen could hardly repress her agitation as she made her speech at the opening of Parliament, and came to the sentence:—

"I have to lament that in consequence of a failure of the potato crop in many parts of the United Kingdom, there will be a deficient supply of an article of food which forms the chief subsistence of great numbers of my people. The disease by which the plant has been affected has prevailed to the utmost extent in Ireland. I have adopted all such precautions as it was in my power to take for the purpose of alleviating the calamity, and I shall confidently rely on your co-operation in devising such other means for effecting the same benevolent purpose as may require the sanction of the Legislature."

Her heart was indeed bleeding for her people, and though all mention of the Corn Laws had been carefully omitted, all knew what was meant. Indeed, no one doubted that immediate abolition of the duty was required during the present distress; the question was, as to its future imposition according to Peel's sliding-scale.

The debate on the Address was hot in both Houses, but nothing to that which followed, when, on January 27th, 1846, Peel brought forward his resolutions, and was hotly attacked as a traitor to his party by Disraeli, who, next to Lord George Bentinck, had become the

leader of the Protectionists. Prince Albert, very anxious and interested, went to hear Sir Robert's speech, and in the wrath of the crisis, Lord George Bentinck, on the twelfth night of the debate, said:—

"I cannot but think he listened to ill advice when, on the first night of this great discussion, he allowed himself to be seduced by the First Minister of the Crown to come down to the House to usher in and to give *éclat*, and, as it were, reflection from the Queen, to give the semblance of a personal sanction of her Majesty to a measure which, be it for good or for evil, a great majority at least of the landed aristocracy of England, of Scotland, and of Ireland, imagine fraught with deep injury, if not ruin, to them."

There had, of course, been no seduction in the case; it had been a mere matter of desire to hear the speech that was to bring in what all felt to be a gradual revolution, and nobody was more penetrated than the Prince with a sense of the expedience of his manifesting no partiality. The attack was, therefore, very vexatious, and was only excused by the irritation of what was felt as treachery in the camp. It was true that Prince Albert's heart was with Peel, but this was only manifested in private letters, and in public the endeavour was not to show the least bias; so that, finding what displeasure his appearance had given, he thenceforth absented himself.

Peel's measure was carried in the Commons by a majority chiefly composed of his opponents, against the larger proportion of his original party, and in the

Lords by the guidance of the Duke of Wellington. Such a state of things made the tenure of the Ministry most insecure, and there was already the opportunity ready for their overthrow. Ireland had, even before the famine, been working up into one of her periodical states of lawless outrage and violence, and the efforts made by the whole English people to send relief had no effect in softening her demagogues or gaining the slightest gratitude. A Bill was required to give power for the repression of disorders, and in ordinary times would have been readily passed. The Whig Lords actually let it pass the Upper House, but in the Lower there was a coalition of Protectionists and Liberals, and on June 26th—the very day on which the Repeal of the Corn Laws received the Assent of the Lords—the Irish Coercion Bill was defeated by 392 against 219, and Sir Robert Peel felt it impossible to carry on the Government. Both the Queen and Prince Albert were much grieved, for they had learnt to consider him and Lord Aberdeen as close friends; their sentiments of mixed Conservatism and Liberalism chimed in with his, and they were warmly grateful to him for the chivalrous spirit of self-devotion with which he had broken with the traditions of his party, ruptured old friendships, and incurred cruel accusations of treachery for the sake of what he and they believed to be needful for the country. Whether the

policy was far-sighted or otherwise, there is no doubt of the spirit that dictated it, in him as in the Queen and Prince.

Up to the present century, the Sovereign would have retained the Ministry he preferred, but the practice of the Constitution had come to require absolute submission in this respect to the dominant party in the House.

The outgoing Ministry had secured peace with America on the frontier question, and was concluding the Sikh war with three brilliant victories.

From the time of his full initiation into business and assumption of his rightful authority, during the Peel Ministry, Prince Albert was (as Count Vizthum describes him):—

"Complete master in his house, and the active centre of an empire whose power extends to every quarter of the globe. It was a gigantic task for a young German Prince to think and act for all these millions of British subjects. All the threads were gathered together in his hands. Not a single despatch was sent from the Foreign Office which the Prince had not seen, studied, and, if necessary, altered. Not a single report of any importance from an ambassador was allowed to be kept from him. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Secretary of War, the Home Secretary, the First Lord of the Admiralty, all handed to him every day just as large bundles of papers as did the Foreign Office. Everything was read, commented upon, and discussed. In addition to all this, the Prince kept up private correspondence with foreign sovereigns, with British ambassadors and envoys, with the Governor-General of India, and with the governors of the various colonies. . . . No British Cabinet Minister has ever worked so hard during the session of parliament, and that is saying a good deal, as the Prince Consort did for twenty-one years. And the

Ministers come and go, or at any rate if they remain as long in Office as Palmerston and Russell, they have four or five months' holiday every year. The Prince had no holidays at all, he was always in harness. . . . If the Crown's game, as Prince Metternich expressed it, has been well played, this result must be doubly creditable to (Prince Albert) inasmuch as he could only direct the game and not play it himself. With what tact and skill he did so, is proved that with the exception of the British Ministers and a few intimate friends, no one had any idea of the actual position of the Prince."

He endeavoured to watch over everything, and especially perhaps in the affairs of the Church shewed something of the spirit fostered by the peculiar influence of the State over religious affairs in Germany, taking as an instance his letter to Samuel Wilberforce on the appointment to the See of Oxford, in the autumn of 1845, full of very sensible advice as to the duties of a Bishop, but with a tone of authority rather inappropriate as written by a young man of twenty-eight to a Dean of forty-one years old :—

"Let him never forget the insufficiency of human knowledge and wisdom, and the impossibility of any man or even any Church to say 'I am right, and I alone am right.' Let him, therefore, be meek, and liberal, and tolerant to other confessions; but let him never forget that he is a representative of the Church of the land, the maintenance of which is as important to the country as that of its Constitution or throne. Let him, therefore, always be conscious that the Church has duties to fulfil, that it does not exist for itself but for the people, for the country, and that it ought to have no higher aim than to be the Church of the people. Let there be, therefore, no calling for new rights, privileges, grants, &c., but show the zeal and capacity of the Church to stretch her powers and capabilities to the utmost for the fulfilment of her sacred duties to the people in ministering and teaching."

The letter was in fact an essay on ministerial duties by one whose education naturally led him to look only on that side of the Church's vocation; and so Bishop Wilberforce understood it. His relations with the Prince were at this time most agreeable, and Wilberforce felt that the selection of him as Bishop was a sacrifice, for it had been planned to make him tutor to the Prince of Wales. "But," he writes after a visit to Osborne, in 1846 "they thought it unfair to me to let their wish for a future and contingent appointment stand in the way of my present position, and so they gave me up as tutor, thinking that as friend and adviser I might be perhaps in many ways as useful."

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVOLUTIONS.

1846-1848.

The Liberal Ministry — Relations of the Premier and Foreign Secretary with the Court—The Spanish marriages—Letters of Prince Albert and the Queen—Attempts to delay the marriage—The Chancellorship of Cambridge University—The potato famine —Intervention in Portugal—The Isle of Man and Ardverikie—The Prince's memorandum on German union—Irish Coercion Bill —Uneasiness in Europe—The February revolution—Reception of the exiles—Birth of the Princess Louise—The Chartist procession—The Prince and the working classes—The revolution in Germany — The Prince's scheme — Meeting of the Frankfort assembly — Anxiety of the Prince — Life at Balmoral — The Hungarian rebellion and dissolution of the Frankfort Diet—Science at Cambridge—The Prince and Bishop Wilberforce.

THE new Ministry had Lord John Russell as Premier; Lord Palmerston, already a veteran, at the Foreign Office, much against the personal wishes of the Queen and Prince; Earl Grey as Colonial, and Sir George Grey as Home Secretary. The Duke of Wellington, in deference to the strongly expressed wishes of the Queen, remained Commander-in-Chief.

There was less perhaps of intimate confidence and intercourse, than there had been with the last two Prime Ministers. Melbourne had been an almost fatherly director, Peel an intimate friend, while in the words of Lord Campbell (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Lord John's "deportment to the Queen is most respectful, but he always remembers that as *she* can do no wrong, *he* is responsible for all measures of her Government. He is enough at Court to show that he enjoys the constitutional confidence of the sovereign without being domiciled there as a favourite." Lord Palmerston, moreover, was experienced, and unlike Lord Aberdeen, little disposed to refer more than he could help to the Queen, and inclined to avoid what he considered as interference from the Prince.

As an interlude in political affairs, came the Prince's opening of the docks at Liverpool, and taking possession of the new buildings at Osborne. Endeavours were made to relieve Irish destitution, by huge private subscriptions, spent in rice and Indian meal, and by Government works, chiefly on roads and bridges, but unfortunately not on drainage or reclaiming waste land; and the distress and disaffection still continued.

In the midst of the autumn rest came the astounding news that Louis Philippe had broken his royal word, given to the Queen in person at Eu, and that at the very same time, Queen Isabella of Spain, was to be married

to her cousin, the Duke of Cadiz, and her sister, the Infanta Louisa Fernanda to the Duke of Montpensier, third son to the King of the French.

The excuse for this was, that Leopold of Coburg, a brother of the husband of the Queen of Portugal, had been proposed for Queen Isabella. It seems that the Queen-mother, Christina, had written a letter to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, who was then at Lisbon. She showed it to Sir Henry Bulwer the British Envoy, afterwards Lord Dalling, and though he told her his Government was pledged not to support any such proposal, she asked him to let it travel with his despatches, which, as a matter of courtesy, he could not refuse.

The matter was further complicated by one of Lord Palmerston's hasty despatches, never submitted to the Queen or Prince, only sent to Lord John Russell, on a Sunday morning just as he was going to Church, when he read it hastily, without seeing the danger it raised by the mere mention of Prince Leopold. In point of fact, both the Spanish Queens, mother and daughter, would have preferred that prince, but the Spanish Government resented the notion of being dictated to by England, still more by Portugal; and therefore acceded to Louis Philippe's offers, which he justified by declaring the Coburg proposal to be a breach of the engagement between himself and England. He also took the convenient opportunity of announcing the

marriage when Queen Victoria, her husband and Lord Palmerston, were all out yachting together, so that no immediate opinion could be expressed.

Prince Albert wrote to his brother on September 17th :—

"You have already been surprised at the sudden and strange issue of the Spanish affairs. Nothing can have been more faithless than the whole course of the French policy. We have been led on and triumphed over in the dark—a pitiful triumph to have deceived a friend, almost an only one, and at the very moment when he was making a sacrifice to friendship. For the poor Queens clung to Leopold to the last, and only gave him up when Bulwer assured them that we could not vote for him, and were bound to agree to Don Enrique, who, as a Bourbon, had the support of France.

"Then Bresson profited by the displeasure of the ladies to press Don Francisco on them, and concluded for Montpensier for the Infanta. King Louis Philippe had given us his word of honour not to think of this second marriage till the Queen was married and had children *et celà ne serait pas une affaire politique*. Now he explains that he was released from his word because Leopold was proposed, contrary to Aberdeen's assurance. A fine invention! The '*bonne entente*' is trampled on, it cannot be called 'not stirred—not cracked,' for we are rightly greatly offended, and in Spain the people are in full uproar. The proverb is true, 'Honesty is the best policy' (*Ehrlich wahrt am langesten*)."

Certainly the offence against both political allianee and private friendship might well be deeply felt by the Queen and the Prince.

Truthful and honourable themselves, they grieved at the flat breach of promise of the friend whom they had esteemed, and resented the implication of similar bad faith in themselves; they were disappointed at the

failure of such an apparently unsuccessful negotiation as had been made at Cadiz, and Queen Victoria as a woman and a mother, felt deeply for the young Spanish Queen, who was given to a man known to be distasteful to her, and as it was thought, in the hope that she would be childless. In every point of view it was a shock, not diminished by the unmeaning letter that Queen Marie Amélie was instructed to write to Queen Victoria, announcing the marriage as if all were smooth and no objections in the way.

Her Majesty's brief answer shewed grave and dignified displeasure, and ended with the cutting sentence: "I crave your pardon, madam, for speaking to you of politics in a time like this; but I am glad that I can say for myself that I have always been *sincere* with you." Well might Lord Palmerston write to Lord Normanby, "The Queen has written the King of the French a tickler." The King of the French was much mortified by the tone of this "tickler," and sat up for three nights till four in the morning, to compose his self-justification, which he addressed to his daughter, the Queen of the Belgians, to be sent on, of course, to England, thus trying to shift the accusation of double dealing to the English Foreign Office, and implying that Queen Victoria saw through Lord Palmerston's spectacles.

This letter elicited a spirited but most careful reply,

likewise through the medium of Queen Louise, in which the identity of the policy of Aberdeen and Palmerston was vindicated, and after going through the whole course of proceedings, the Queen adds: "I have then thoroughly considered the whole matter by myself, and looking at it with no eyes but my own, and I cannot possibly admit that the King is released from his pledge."

V. R., as she signed this letter, alone appeared in the matter, but every word was discussed with "her dear master," as she loved to term her husband in her familiar notes, and it was as much his as hers. The hope was that Louis Philippe might be induced at least to defer the marriage, the Infanta being only in her sixteenth year, but some infatuation seemed to possess Louis Philippe, and he persisted, through his influence over the Spanish Court, in effecting both marriages at the same time, on October 10th, 1846; thus, as matters turned out, doing far more harm to himself than to Spain or England, by causing himself to be suspected by his jealous nation of personal unscrupulous ambition for family aggrandisement. The Queen, though much hurt, was ready to relent and forgive as soon as the deed was done and could not be undone; but Prince Albert felt far more sternly. He wrote to Stockmar that "the worship of truth and reason had become every day more and more a matter

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of conscience with him," and he felt the whole proceeding as unrighteous in itself, and as a national insult, all the worse because the French government thought proper to pretend that it was England that had been the deceiver.

Great self-command was, however, exercised to prevent this strong sense of injury from leading to war and bloodshed between the two nations, and the action was left to work out its own consequences, though Metternich said "one does not play tricks with impunity with great countries."

Nevertheless, the first effect of the affront thus put upon England was that the Austrian, Russian and Prussian Powers took the opportunity of effecting the annexation to Austria the little Republic of Cracow, the last remnant of Polish independence, which had been guaranteed by the treaties of 1815. Each power protested, but as they did not combine they were unheeded. "Sooner would I have been burnt alive," wrote Prince Albert, "than have acted like these States. He much wished a pamphlet to be written on the subject, but it was thought inexpedient, and his views were only put forth through an article in the *Edinburgh Review.*

It was a time of much care and anxiety, for the keen eyes of statesmen presaged the tempest that was brewing for the ensuing year, but at home fresh honours

were bestowed on the Prince, in the choice of him as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. His election was not without opposition, for the Earl of Powis, as champion of the Welsh Bishoprics, was put in nomination, and 837 votes were given for him, 953 for the Prince. The minority was so large that there was some hesitation as to accepting the office, but the Prince was assured that a refusal would only lead to a second contest and a more bitter one, and his inauguration took place on March 25th, 1847, his installation in the ensuing July. He was requested to select the poet who was to write the installation ode, and his choice was of the Laureate, the now aged Wordsworth. Such compositions are proverbially trying, but Wordsworth spoke from his heart, and his verses were such as to chime in with the general enthusiasm while avoiding fulsomeness.

"Albert, in thy race we cherish
A nation's strength that will not perish,
While England's scepter'd line,
True to the King of Kings is found,
Like that wise ancestor of thine,
Who threw the Saxon shield o'er Luther's life,
When first above the yells of bigot strife
The trumpet of the living Word
Assumed a voice of deep portentous sound,
From gladdened Elbe to startled Tiber found."

Verses earlier in the poem spoke of the sages of Cambridge having—

"Pondered here their country's weal,
Weigh'd the future by the past,
Learned how social frames may last,
And how a land may rule its fate
By constancy inviolate,
Though worlds to their foundations reel,
The sport of faction's hate and godless zeal."

These were words soon realised, and, indeed, at this very time the kingdom was in a state of great suffering from the potato famine. In England, in spite of the opening of the ports, wheat was so scarce that even in the royal household every one was restricted to a pound a day, and secondary flour used in the kitchen; and in Ireland the sufferings were awful. Living skeletons dragged themselves to the public works, and often died on the first exertion. It was hard even to get the dead buried; pestilence followed famine, and the two millions voted by Parliament, and the subscriptions of English of all ranks and degrees, seemed but as drops in the ocean of wretchedness.

There was at the same time great scarcity of money in England, and severe commercial distress. Portugal was in a state of civil war, between Queen Maria and the Junta, and an English attempt at mediation, backed by an English fleet, put an end to the conflict, and enabled the Government to prevail. It was taken up by the Opposition in Parliament as "a Coburg family affair." It really was used as a cause for overthrowing the already unstable Cabinet. Joseph Hume began the

attack, but Peel defended the Government, and the debate, after three days, ended in a count-out of the Commons, and a majority of 20 in favour of the action in the Lords.

A dissolution followed, and before the new Parliament met a splendid harvest had relieved the want in England, and thus, with freer minds, the royal party yachted in the Hebrides, taking the two eldest children with them, and on the way visiting the Isle of Man. To their great amusement a Manx newspaper announced that Prince Albert led the Prince Regent by the hand. Another paper said: "The Prince looked pleased with everything and everybody, and himself too." The Prince confessed merrily, in a letter to the Duchess of Kent, that this was true, adding, "Is not this a happy state?"

Ardverikie, a hunting-lodge on the banks of Loch Laggan was the resting-place of the travellers during the month of August, in such bad weather as spoilt most of the out-of-door enjoyment, and gave more time than sufficient for study and letter-writing, as well as conversation with Prince Charles of Leiningen, the Queen's half-brother. Prince Albert writes:—

"I am deep in German politics with Charles, who understands them *à fond*, and we write memorandums with a view to the strengthening of German unity by means of a living union, and keep pounding away at Austria as the main obstruction.

"In European politics that power is likely to bring us into a frightful complication in Italy. We can see the storm brewing. I am strongly of opinion that England should declare betimes that *it will*

not endure that independent States should be forcibly prevented from setting about such internal reforms as they shall think for their advantage. This appears to me the sound basis for us, *vis-à-vis* of Germany, Switzerland and Italy. We are frequently inclined to plunge States into Constitutional reforms towards which they have no inclination. This I hold to be quite wrong (*vide* Spain, Portugal, Greece), although it is Lord Palmerston's hobby; but, on the other hand, I maintain that England's true position is to be the defence and support of States whose independent development is sought to be impeded from without."

A few days later he says of Lord Grey, who had just left Ardverikie:—

"There was not one principle contended for by him (and he *has* principles, which is more than can be said of all the statesmen of the day) to which I would not cheerfully subscribe. He is very positive in his views, fond of discussion, and sticks very firmly to his opinions; but he is quite open to argument, and if worsted, is ready to own it at once, and to adopt the argument by which he was overthrown. 'Yes, I was wrong,' he will say, the moment he is shown to have been in error.

"Lord Palmerston acts less upon principle; still, obstinate although he is, he always gives in when he is driven into a corner by argument."

Lord Palmerston did not delight in being driven into a corner, and was not disposed to bring more than he could help to the Prince's notice. With much care the Prince, acting rather as a German than as the spokesman of the English throne, drew up a scheme for German unity, of which it is not needful to enter into the details; but part of the last paragraph deserves notice:—

"My own view is, that the political reformation of Germany lies entirely in the hands of Prussia, and that Prussia has only to will to accomplish this result. . . . . If Prussia were really to adopt the plan of reform here chalked out, and to carry it out steadily and

fearlessly, she would become the leading and directing power in Germany, which other Governments and peoples would have to follow, and in this way would come to be regarded as one of the most important European powers, seeing that in the European scale she would weigh as Prussia *plus* Germany. If, on the other hand, she declines to undertake the guidance of a moderate and systematic German development, then the vital forces of the nation, driven onward by the pressure of the times, will find some irregular vent for themselves and produce convulsions of all sorts, the final issue of which no human power can foresee."

The first step towards this union was thought to be taken by the Zollverein toll union, by which a large proportion of the German States agreed in the customs imposed on foreign goods, and caused English goods, among others, to pay duty. Lord Palmerston, therefore, while wishing for alliance between England and Germany for mutual protection, strongly discouraged the Zollverein; and Stockmar himself thought the Prince had left Germany too young fully to understand the bearings of the case, or to be able to propound what he called a "Regeneration Plan." With his usual deference to his adviser, the Prince tried to detain his memorandum till he could consult over it with Stockmar, but he was too late; it was already on the way to the King of Prussia, and very soon the predicted convulsions began to carry matters beyond the reach of theory.

The new Parliament was forced to meet in the autumn, to pass a Bill for the control of violence in Ireland. The rejection of the Conservative measure on

purely party grounds had caused a prolongation of the lawless outrages which it was intended to suppress, and, as Lord Stanley declared, with too much truth, "it was safer in that island to violate than to obey the law." The Bill was passed by overwhelming majorities in the Commons, and without a division in the Lords; and, as usual, firmness gradually produced an interval in the savage turbulence of Ireland.

Everywhere there was a sense of anxiety above and upheaval below. The Duke of Coburg, who visited Berlin early in January, 1848, found Frederick William IV. indisposed to the course recommended alike by Prince Albert and Bunsen, on account of the favour with which the English Cabinet treated the revolutionary tendencies of Italy. Pius IX. had shown a sympathy with the national feeling against the alien despotism of Austria which encouraged hope; but, like Frederick William, he was beginning to stand aghast at the manifestations he had himself evoked. The Duke found the Court of Berlin uneasy under the vague expectation of a disaster, and when he passed on to Brussels he found King Leopold full of gloomy forebodings as to the condition of Paris. "My father-in-law," he said, "will be driven away like Charles X. The catastrophe is unavoidable in France, and, in consequence, in Germany."

Thence the Duke and his suite proceeded to England,

arriving at Windsor on February 6th. After conversations with him, Prince Albert wrote:—

"The Pope is the counterpart of the King of Prussia. Great impulsiveness, half-digested political ideas, little acuteness of intellect, with a great deal of cultivated intelligence and accessibility to outward influences. The rock on which both split is the belief that they can set their subjects in motion and keep the direction and spread of the movement entirely in their own hands, nay, that they alone possess the *right* to control the movement because it emanates from themselves."

In the same letter he adds:—

"I may not conceal from you the fact that Paris at this moment is causing us extreme anxiety. Louis Philippe and Guizot show great political boldness, but they have taken their stand entirely on the old Bourbon *terrain*. The beginning of the change, and it may be the determining momentum, I still hold to have been the Spanish marriages."

This was written on February 19th. Before a week was over, Louis Philippe and his family had been expelled from Paris, and were by twos and threes arriving in England. The prohibition of the Reform banquets was the last exciting cause, but there were no doubt far deeper reasons, besides the fickle and excitable nature of the French, who, when once their royal line had, by tyranny, oppression, and vice, thrown away the loyalty once the prime sentiment of the nation, have constantly sought impossible ideals, and overthrown whatever Government fell short of them. The Spanish marriages had shown a personal and family ambition, which caused

a distrust of the professions of the Citizen King; the Duke of Praslin, after a horrible crime, committed suicide in prison, and the jealous democratic temper believed that this had been permitted to prevent the public execution of the representative of one of the oldest families in France. Much corruption had been discovered, and, in short, the nation believed that the Orleans dynasty was found wanting; and, after their usual habit, left the destinies of their country in the hands of the mob of Paris.

The Royal Family in England were deeply affected. Queen Victoria's generous spirit was profoundly stirred. All the offence as to the Spanish marriages was forgotten. Mr. Greville records in his diary:—

"Nothing but the extraordinary good sense of Prince Albert, with the boundless influence he has over her, keeps her affectionate feelings under due restraint."

The Duke of Coburg, who was at Windsor, says:—

"The arrival of Louis Philippe in England, and the melancholy fate of a family so closely connected with our House, kept us daily as breathless as if we had been directly afflicted by the Revolution. The agitating circumstances with which nearly the whole Orleans family had been driven away, and the piteous adventures of many single members in themselves made a painful impression. It is well known that the poor Duchess of Montpensier, after many adventures, arrived in England so entirely devoid of necessaries that the Queen had to send her clothes before she could appear at Windsor. I myself received Nemours on his landing at Dover. The Queen sent a special train to bring him at once to London. It would be wearisome to record all the scenes of which we were continually witnesses. From my own

country reports came compelling me to shorten my sojourn in England. From the commencement of the year there had been signs that a domestic disturbance might not be spared us in these days of political agitation. On the 22nd of February, during our absence in England, died at Gotha, my grandmother, the Duchess Caroline, and from that time Job's messengers pursued us."

The Duchess had been as a mother to the Princes, and when his brother hurried away, on March 5th, Prince Albert, in great depression, wrote to Stockmar:—

"I have need of friends and counsellers in these heavy times, Come, as you love me, as you love Victoria, as you love *Uncle Leopold*, as you love your German Fatherland."

Unfortunately, Stockmar was seriously unwell, but one anxiety was relieved by the birth of Princess Louise, the fourth daughter and sixth child of the Royal Family, on March 18th. There was wild disturbance everywhere—every throne in Europe seemed to be quaking. Even London had its mobs, and the disaffected announced their intention of assembling, on April 10th, 1848, and marching in procession to London, to present a monster petition for the People's Charter.

There was great anxiety for the only partly-recovered Queen, who was sent in haste to Osborne. Many thought, like Lord Campbell, that there would soon be a Provisional Government; but the Duke of Wellington was called upon to keep the troops in readiness, while no less than 170,000 men of all ranks offered themselves to be sworn in as special constables. To them all *visible*

defence was committed. Not a soldier was seen, but the great Field-Marshal had every point so guarded that, at the least sign that military support was required the troops would have been at hand ready to act. There is no need to say what an utter failure the Chartist procession was, and how not a shot was fired; but peace, order, and loyalty triumphed. In the words of the Prince: "What a glorious day was yesterday for England! How mightily this will tell all over the world!"

Still, anxiety was far from being over. The distress in Ireland continued, and the disaffection seemed to be coming to a head, and uniting with Chartism in England, where physical force was talked off.

There were, however, quarrels among the leaders, and after some arrests, and many dispersions of tumultuous gatherings, the restlessness began to subside. The true feeling of royalty for the troubles of the people was shown by Prince Albert, who was already President of the Society for Improving the Condition of the Working Classes, insisting on taking the chair at a meeting on May 18th, though some of the Ministry were averse to his appearance, lest it should give occasion to disloyal demonstrations. He regarded it, as he declared, as an occasion for "expressing the sincere interest which the Queen and myself feel for the welfare and comfort of the working classes." His speech on the day itself

asserted that any real improvement must come from the working people themselves, and likewise that it was the duty of the rich to concur in helping those who would help themselves. "But," said he:—

"Let them be careful to avoid any dictatorial interference with labour and employment, which frightens away capital, destroys that freedom of thought and independence of action which must remain to every one if he is to work out his own happiness, and impairs that confidence under which alone engagements for mutual benefit are possible."

All the time the Prince's German heart was greatly exercised on the plans for the reconstruction of his Fatherland. Reconstruction it could hardly be called. The old German Empire had claimed to continue that of Augustus and Charles the Great, but the conquests of Napoleon had entirely broken this up, the princes becoming practically independent sovereigns, though they were still held together in Confederation with a Diet meeting at Frankfort. But there was a strong craving for greater unity, and a certain sense that the exceedingly small principalities were very undesirable, their rulers being almost driven by poverty into questionable means of supporting their position, such as the licenses to gaming tables at Baden.

Prince Albert had already been constructing schemes, as has been shown, but his hopes rested on Prussia; and the reigning King, with many good qualities, had not force of character to carry them out. The French

disturbances precipitated matters, and the people everywhere broke out, and loudly demanded constitutional government. In Vienna and in Berlin there were insurrections on the same day, and while their sovereigns were occupied, the other German States sent deputies to Frankfort to arrange for the holding a general Diet for a new Confederation.

In March, Prince Albert drew up a scheme, which he sent to the Courts of Austria, Prussia, and Saxony, explaining at full length his suggestions for the unity and safety of Germany. He desired the election of an Emperor for life, or a certain period of years, to deal with external politics, leaving each State free for its own home affairs. There should be a Diet of the Empire, with three Chambers, so as to express the collective will of the whole German people, yet so arranged that the representatives of each State and people should have their place and standing as such.

His hopes were fixed on Prussia, but Frederick William's answer and circular were indecisive, while the Duke of Coburg wrote to him that his projects were those of an Optimist. Neither of the brothers thought well of Frankfort as a place of assembly. On April 19th, Prince Albert wrote: "Strive not to let Frankfort remain the capital city of Germany. It is a bad place, and easily overrun by fellows from Baden, Mainz, Darmstadt, Mannheim, &c., as well as much too near

the French frontier. Nuremberg is the centre of Germany, and in suitable country."

Stockmar was to sit at Frankfort as one of the Coburg deputies, but his scheme for unity was not the same as that of the Prince. It was an anxious time, in which Prince Albert could not but take a most earnest part, as well from his heart being primarily German, as because of his being the next heir to his childless brother, whose Duchy was finally settled upon his second son.

The assembly actually met, to the number of about 500 at Frankfort, and on March 21st, 1848, constituted themselves a Provisional Parliament, and further decided to convoke a National Assembly from all parts of Germany, for the 18th of May, 1848. Schemes were drawn up for the new German Constitution, on which the Prince sent his comments, especially objecting to the sovereign Princes being placed among the peers.

"Patriotism can resign itself to everything except change of principle. That Sovereigns should sit among other counsellors of the Empire as such, is not possible, indeed, it is not obedient to the German Emperor and Parliament. But can it be expected that you should be at home Duke, Grand Duke, Elector, or King, and at Frankfort one of two hundred senators? I cannot understand how such a shot can be made. It is quite necessary that you Sovereigns should understand one another on this point, and press for a removal of the Residence from Frankfort. It is a dreadful place for a German central point."

Old memories and the unpractical theories of the German politicians, however, turned on assembling at

Frankfort. In the beginning, Prince Albert had a visit from Prince Max von Gagern, who revealed to him a good deal of the *dessous des cartes.* The result was that in the ironical mood which he only permitted himself with his brother, he remarks on "the acquisitions of the new era."

"Mine consists in a pocket-handkerchief of the German colours, that has been sent to me from Frankfort, the situation of Self-complete (*Sich selbst Ich'sen*) German Men, Brothers, Burghers, Representatives, Fifty-ers, debating Counsellors, and I can now sneeze in accordance with the times!"

He had ceased to found many hopes on the National Assembly, and though the choice of the Archduke John of Austria, as head of the Provisional Central Government was a good one, there was much useless discussion and talk. Prince Albert looked on most anxiously, writing both to his brother and to Prince Charles von Leiningen, the Queen's half-brother. To his brother he says on July 29th:—

"Charles writes again that the Princes cannot maintain themselves, and he advises them to abdicate quickly, so as at least to secure good treatment. But this is a poor comprehension of higher interests. I believe more and more in union as a Federal Monarchy. Prussia's being started will work well, only the Archduke must be surrounded by deputies from single States. Whom do you send?"

The Archduke chose seven members from the Assembly to form a ministry, Prince Leiningen at their head. To him Prince Albert wrote on August 21st:—

"The only thing which in the long run will hold together in Germany is the relation which has grown up through sentiment and history between the governing families and the countries hereditarily appertaining to their Houses. The weakness is greatest in the countries which, by the operation of injustice and crime, have become united under certain reigning Houses (Baden, Wurtemberg, Darmstadt, Rhenish Prussia, Rhenish Bavaria, &c.), and the weakness will attach to the German Central Government also, if, instead of being an adequate expression of the States and Governments under it, it aims and is bent on standing on the basis of the Revolution, and following out some plan moulded on expediency, by certain popular, or rather Revolutionary statesmen.

In this anxiety the Prince did not meet with much sympathy in England. Lord Aberdeen told Mr. Greville—

"that the Prince's views were generally sound and wise, with one exception, which was his violent and incorrigible German Unionism. He goes all lengths with Prussia, will not hear of a moderate plan—a species of Federalism, based on the Treaty of Vienna and the old relations of Germany, and insists on a new German Empire with Prussia at its head."

Confusion began to prevail. The first Holstein war had begun, and Prussia and the Diet attacked Denmark, on the plea that Holstein belonged to the Germanic Confederation. Prussia conducted the war, and, by-and-by, decided on an armistice, which was accepted by the majority of the National Assembly, but the minority declared that this betrayed the German cause. The seven ministers had already resigned, and the Duke of Coburg had quitted Frankfort on September 10th, full of gloomy forebodings, which were realised on the 16th, when the mob were incited to rise and barricade the streets. Two Prussian depu-

ties, returning from a ride, were killed, and though the insurrection was put down immediately by troops from Prussia and Darmstadt, bitterness and hopeless disputes prevailed, not only at Frankfort, but everywhere in Germany.

Meantime, the threatened Irish rebellion had been extinguished in ridicule, and a Chartist rising in England was prevented by timely measures. Far from the scholars in the colleges being ringleaders in riot, as they were in almost every continental country, nowhere was enthusiasm and loyalty warmer than in English universities and public schools.

The farmers were gratified by the Prince's appearance at the Grand Agricultural Show at York, and the speech in which he identified himself with them; while the inventors and makers of machines were delighted with his thorough appreciation of the work, by which high farming had been enabled to enter into competition with the world. Holiday time was coming at last. Scotland had always proved such a place of health and refreshment to the Royal Family that the Prince had decided on taking a lease of Balmoral from Lord Aberdeen, and making it a delightful Highland home of freedom from restraint, and enjoyment of sport. Deer stalking was a great delight to the Prince, who took pleasure in sport of all kinds, but always with sufficient moderation to enable him to be the Queen's companion

for a large proportion of the day, and to give by no means nominal attention to his children. Mr. Greville thus describes a visit to Balmoral :—

"The place is very pretty, the house very small. They live there without any state whatever; they live not merely like private gentlefolks, but like very small gentlefolks—small house, small rooms, small establishment. There are no soldiers, and the whole guard of the Sovereign consists of a single policeman, who walks about the grounds to keep off impertinent intruders or improper characters. Their attendants consisted of Lady Douro and Miss Dawson, Lady and Maid of Honour, George Anson, and Gordon; Birch, the Prince of Wales's tutor, and Miss Hildyard, governess to the children. They live with the greatest simplicity and ease. The Prince shoots every morning, returns to luncheon, and then they walk or drive. The Queen is running in and out of the house all day long, and often goes about alone, walks into the cottages, and chats with the old women. I never before was in society with the Prince, or had any conversation with him. On Thursday morning, John Russell and I were sitting with him three-quarters of an hour. I was greatly struck with him. I saw at once that he is very intelligent and highly cultivated, and, moreover, that he has a thoughtful mind, and thinks of subjects worth thinking about. He seemed very much at his ease, very gay, pleasant, and without the least stiffness or dignity. After luncheon, we went to the Highland gathering at Braemar, the Queen, the Prince, four children and two ladies in one carriage, John Russell, Mr. Birch, Miss Hildyard and I in another, Anson and Gordon on the box, one groom—no more. The gathering was at the old castle of Braemar, and a pretty sight enough. We returned as we came, and then everybody strolled about till dinner. We were only nine people, and it was all very easy and really agreeable, the Queen in very good humour and talkative, the Prince still more so, and talking very well—no form, and everybody seemed at their ease. In the evening we withdrew to the only room there is besides the dining-room, which serves for billiards, library (hardly any books in it) and drawing-room. The Queen and Prince, and her ladies and Gordon, soon went back to the dining-room, where they had a Highland dancing-master, who gave them lessons in reels."

These peaceful scenes were in strong contrast to the events of the summer and autumn on the Continent. Hungary was in revolt against the dominion of Austria. Vienna followed the example of revolution; and though the troops of Jellachich and Windischgrätz prevailed, and order was restored, the Emperor Ferdinand felt himself unable to cope with such difficult times, and resigned in favour of his nephew, Francis Joseph. Paris had undergone fresh tumults and another day of barricades, and the calm produced by the election of Louis Napoleon to the Presidency was welcome. Well might Prince Albert sadly write "the world is worse than ever."

What the Duke of Coburg calls the end of the Frankfort dream drew on. In the March of 1849, it was decided that the title of "Emperor of the Germans" should be offered to the King of Prussia, but there was a very considerable minority of States in opposition, and King Frederick William declined what would have been an almost empty honour. State after State withdrew its deputies, and finally, after adjourning to Stutgart, the remains of the Assembly was broken up by the government of Würtemburg. So ended Prince Albert's vision of German unity under Prussia—only to be fulfilled after his death, under a more resolute king and sagacious minister — after a long course of preparation, not without violence.

A species of revolution in University studies was, in these years of changes, commenced by the Prince himself, as Chancellor of Cambridge. His desire, backed by Dr. Whewell, was to extend and modernize the course of education beyond the classical and mathematical studies hitherto almost exclusively paramount, by establishing professorships on other practical and scientific subjects with courses of lectures, attendance at one series being made a condition of a degree. *Punch* pronounced that the Prince had taken the *Pons Asinorum* after the manner of Napoleon taking the bridge of Arcola.

For better for worse, this movement was the beginning of that alteration in the course of education which used to enforce the thorough learning of one or at most two studies, and left the rest to cultivated powers and natural taste. The Prince's hand was felt everywhere, he volunteered advice in all departments at home; his influence on politics, and on the direction of English charities was always valuable, and continually was found to give an impulse in the right direction. Perhaps this is the best place for mentioning the remarkable manner in which the Duke of Coburg's character of his brother as being prone to hard judgments of individuals and dislike of what an Englishman would call "humbug," was verified in his relations with Bishop Samuel Wilberforce. He found that most able man and most charming companion in high favour with the Queen,

and was far from insensible to the beauty of his preaching or the delight of his conversation; unbending with him, and discussing many subjects, religious and secular with him, so that indeed the Bishop always declared the Prince to have been one of the ablest men he had ever seen. But gradually there was a change. There was still intercourse, since Windsor lies in the diocese of Oxford, and the Bishop is almoner to the Order of the Garter, but there was coldness and the full confidence was gone. This could be partly accounted for by the "Hampden case," when Dr. Wilberforce had begun by strong opposition to Dr. Hampden's appointment to the See of Hereford, on *theological* grounds, which the Prince could scarcely be expected to understand, while the liberality and the Erastianism alike of German Protestantism was sure to render such resistance most distasteful at Court.

The Bishop had thus dared the displeasure of royalty, doing so on the evidence of extracts taken from Hampden's publications, but when, as diocesan, he found himself compelled personally to examine the entire work, he could not discover that, taken with the context, the portions selected were unorthodox. He, therefore, for the sake of honesty and justice, conscientiously withdrew his opposition, well knowing the obloquy that he should incur, indeed the act was almost universally regarded as a fall, for the sake of obtaining court favour, and

it is only since the publication of his private diaries and letters that it has been fully known how well he knew what he was incurring for the sake of right.

Prince Albert was one of those who could not believe in his rectitude of purpose, and other matters conduced to destroy the former confidence. In especial, the Romanizing of near connections caused the idea that preferment alone held Wilberforce to his own Church. Lord Aberdeen, whom the Prince had once pronounced to be "the most entirely virtuous man that he knew," and who was a great friend of the Bishop, endeavoured to ascertain the roots of this distrust. The Prince said, among other things, "He has a motive for all he does." "Yes, sir," said Lord Aberdeen, "but when a bad motive?"

It seemed that the Prince had fancied that the Bishop had schemed for the tutorship to the Prince of Wales. It was an entire mistake, for the Bishop wrote privately to his friend that such an offer had been his *bête noir*, as it could not well be refused, and yet would be a serious impediment to his diocesan work. The other point adverted to by the Prince was a conversation after a sermon on the legion entering into the herds of swine. The Bishop said "it was best for us to believe in a devil who suggested evil to us, otherwise we were driven to make every man his own devil."

He did not then understand that the Prince actually

disbelieved in the existence of evil spirits, and he was answering the immediate argument; but the Prince carried away the impression that his answer had been a blinking of the view he really held to avoid flat contradiction, and this sort of courtliness, as he judged it, was always despised by him. It was a very unfortunate impression, thus diminishing an influence that might have drawn the Prince's mind to sounder opinions, rather than the Broad church views to which the friendship with Bunsen naturally led. There is, however, reason to think that in the mind of the Prince, as in that of the nation, Samuel Wilberforce entirely lived down those imputations of time-serving and insincerity which were so grievous a trial to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

1849-1851.

Publication of the scheme—Visit to Ireland—The autumn at Balmoral—Exertions of the Prince—His opening speech—Indifference of the public—Peel's support and his death—Lord Palmerston's independence—The Queen's reprimand—The Haynau demonstration—The Duke of Wellington's project of making the Prince Commander-in-Chief—The Ecclesiastical Tithes Bill—Ministerial crisis—Completion of the Exhibition Building—The opening day—The Duke of Coburg's account—Jubilee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—Closing of the Exhibition—Lord Palmerston and Kossuth—The *Coup d'état* and Lord Palmerston's resignation—The Duke of Coburg's evidence—The Militia Bill and resignation of the Ministry—The Derby ministry—Death of the Duke of Wellington—Formation of the Aberdeen ministry—The Prince's day—Visit of the Duke of Coburg—Visitors to the Court.

It was in the summer of 1849, that Prince Albert's favourite scheme of the Great Exhibition was first made public. The great Frankfort fairs had perhaps been the first suggestion of the idea, but those had grown up spontaneously, and purely for traffic, and in France and England there had been from time to time local exhibi-

tions of works of art or industry; but it was Prince Albert who first conceived the idea of taking advantage of the subsidence of the Revolutions of 1848, to invite the entire civilized world to compare their productions of every kind under the same roof.

He first mooted the subject on July 30th, 1849, to four members of the Society of Arts, by whom it was readily accepted, and Somerset House was at first proposed for the spot. Two days later, the Queen and Prince embarked for Kingstown, since there was lull enough in Ireland to warrant the hope that loyalty would be excited by a royal visit.

Success at the time was great, Cork, Dublin, Belfast, vied with one another in enthusiasm, and no one could have believed that Ireland was not the most devotedly attached portion of the British Empire. Thus the stay at Balmoral began cheerfully excepting for German anxieties, and the wear and tear of difficulties in the stupendous undertaking of arranging for the Exhibition, which soon was proved likely to exceed the limits of Somerset House, and to require a new building.

The autumn was a sorrowful one, for it took away the good Queen Adelaide, always a most affectionate aunt. Moreover, Prince Albert suffered a heavy personal loss in the sudden death of Mr. Anson, who had become Privy Purse. All the coldness and shyness described by the

Duke of Coburg, had long since melted away, and strong affection and confidence had grown up. "To me," wrote the Prince, "the blow is very great, the loss immense in a hundred ways." Colonel Phipps succeeded to the post of Privy Purse, and Colonel Grey was appointed secretary, both continuing in these offices for the remainder of the Prince Consort's life.

The loss was especially great in the midst of the business connected with the Exhibition Structure in Hyde Park. The scheme was very coldly received when first it became public, and it could only be brought to bear by the most unremitting exertion on the part of the Prince, Lord Granville, and Mr. Northcote (afterwards Earl of Iddesleigh). "His Royal Highness," wrote Lord Granville, "appears to be almost the only person who has considered the subject both as a whole and its details."

The worry and harass, as well as the constant attention required, coming after the anxieties of the last two years told upon the Prince in sleeplessness and exhausted weariness in the evenings, and the Queen was anxious to send him to Brussels to recruit, but he did not feel that he could be spared, and indeed he would probably only have plunged into the troubled sea of German politics in which his brother was struggling. The first public meeting was held on February 21st, 1850, and was attended by the ambassadors of the foreign courts. The

Prince made a powerful speech on the duty of improving to the utmost the powers given by the Almighty, and of training to the utmost account the resources of nature.

"Science discovers these laws of power, motion and transformation, industry applies them to the raw matter which the earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge. Art teaches us the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry, and gives to our productions forms in accordance with them. Gentlemen, the Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new starting-point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions."

The actual audience fully agreed with the Prince, and it was there that Bishop Wilberforce uttered a phrase respecting which we may well quote the prediction mentioned in Colonel Phipps' letter of thanks, "It is believed, and the Prince fully concurs in the belief, that 'the dignity of labour' will become a proud and a valuable watch-word."

The nation however, was taken by surprise, and was by no means inclined to favour the scheme. The expense and influx of strangers, as well as the importation of foreign goods did not approve themselves to the mind of John Bull. The future of Hyde Park was thought to be threatened, and there was both serious opposition and good humoured mockery of the scheme.

The *Times* led on the attack against the proposed site, and the question was brought forward in Parliament. There were still difficulties that seemed insurmountable

in the estimate of the cost, and the slackness of subscription. Leech had a cartoon in *Punch* representing the Prince cap in hand begging, with the parody beneath:—

> "Pity the sorrows of a poor young Prince,
> Whose costly schemes have borne him to your door;
> Who's in a fix, the matter not to mince,
> Oh! help him out, and commerce swell your store!"

Guarantees were, however, liberally offered by leading firms, and Paxton's beautiful and original design facilitated matters, so that the worst of the difficulties had come to an end, after a full year of perseverance, disappointments, harass and forbearance which had for the time considerably affected the Prince's health. Sir Robert Peel was from the first a staunch and sympathising supporter of the scheme, and likewise, of the more important matter of the foreign policy in which there was no question whose was the guiding though unseen hand. His last speech in the House of Commons was an enunciation of those principles on which the Prince had always endeavoured to act. "Constitutional liberty," he said, "will always be best worked out by those who aspire to freedom by their efforts. You only overload it by your help."

It was a conciliatory and excellent speech, and the regret for this admirable statesman was enhanced when on the very next day occurred the fatal fall that caused

his death on July 2nd. Sorrow was universal, and was nowhere greater than in the Palace. The Prince wrote:—

"Death has snatched from us Peel, the best of men, our truest friend, the strongest bulwark of the throne, the greatest statesman of his time."

And again:—

"The feeling in the country is not to be described. We have lost our truest friend and trustiest counsellor, the throne its most valiant defender, the country its most open-minded and greatest statesman."

And to his brother, on July 4th:—

"We are suffering the deepest grief, for we are stricken by a blow under which we can hardly breathe. Peel is a loss to all Europe, a dreadful one to England, and an incalculable one to the Crown and ourselves personally. The manner of his death was so sorrowful! Thus fails us now the support in Parliament and the influence on opinion with which he guarded the Throne. Parties will again fall into extremes. . . . . Now our Exhibition will be driven out of London. The Protectionists, who are afraid of it; the Radicals, who want to show their power over the Crown property (the Parks); the *Times*, whose solicitor has bought a house close to Hyde Park, bluster and insult. The division should have been for this evening—Peel, who had undertaken the defence, is no more! So we shall probably be defeated, and the whole Exhibition given up! You see we do not lie on a bed of roses. God be our stay!"

Although the results did not include the ruin of this cherished plan, the loss was deeply felt. In truth, of all the Prime Ministers with whom Prince Albert was brought into contact, none so entirely accorded with his feelings, or formed such a friendship with him as Peel, who had the same tone of high

principle and the same mixture of Liberalism and Conservatism in his political sentiments.

On the other hand, in the Foreign Office, Lord Palmerston was determined to act for himself, considering himself more the servant of the nation than of the Crown, and endeavouring to avoid the interposition of the Queen, which he viewed as a cover to that of her husband. Thus he always contrived to take some decisive step before submitting a question to Her Majesty, and this was doubly annoying to her, because she had always taken a warm personal interest in foreign politics, had acted thoroughly in unison with Lord Aberdeen, and, on the contrary, was by no means desirous of being pledged to all to which her present minister committed her. And in point of fact, Prince Albert absolutely distrusted Palmerston, who, as he told Count Vizthum, sacrificed the policy of the country to party ends.

Already, in February, both the Queen and Prince had spoken very strongly to Lord Clarendon on their feelings. The Prince said what he felt strongly was "the humiliating position in which the Queen was placed in the eyes of the whole world. The remonstrances and complaints of other sovereigns directly affected her dignity, and, the consciousness that they as well as all the world knew that she utterly disapproved of what was done in her name, was incon-

ceivably mortifying and degrading." Nor were these measures the wish of the nation, nor of the rest of the ministry, yet by their weak compliance, Palmerston was allowed to set at nought the Sovereign, Government, and public opinion. Minutes which had been submitted to her were sent away in an altered form, and the Emperor of Austria had refused to send an ambassador here because he could not transact business with the Foreign Secretary. No appeal to Lord John Russell was of any use, and Prince Albert's personal remonstrances had been always met with great good humour and ease, but had not the smallest effect. The purpose of the conversation was to induce Lord Clarendon to see what could be done with either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary. "The Prince talked very sensibly and very calmly, very strong, but without excitement of manner."

Nothing having come of this attempt, the following letter was sent in August by the Queen—of course a joint production. She said that

"she requires (of the Foreign Secretary) that he will distinctly state what he proposes in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to what she has given her Royal sanction. Having once given her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Ministry. Such an act she must consider a failure in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of all that passes between him and the Foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken based upon

that intercourse; to receive the foreign despatches in good time; and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time for her to make herself acquainted with the contents before they are sent off."

To this communication, which was sent through the Premier, Palmerston replied by a short note of excuse as to hurry, and of promise for the future, and he requested an interview with the Prince.

Then, with tears in his eyes, he declared himself greatly hurt at the accusation of having treated the Queen with disrespect, saying that it was "an imputation on his honour as a gentleman, and if he could have made himself guilty of it, he was *almost* no longer fit to be tolerated in society."

The Prince, after listening to him, reminded him of the many previous complaints made by the Queen, and explained that what she desired was to be put in full possession of all the facts before any line of policy was adopted. She would give way when convinced by her Cabinet of the expedience of a measure, but she claimed the right of having full information on what it was based. The argument lasted full an hour, and no positive answer was extracted from the Minister, though he seemed very low and agitated; but he did not resign, and only the next month committed England again by a hasty despatch unrevised by the Queen. It had been reported that the Austrian General, Haynau, when putting down the Hungarian insurrection had been

guilty of great barbarities, in especial of flogging women. On his coming to make a visit to England, he was taken to see Barclay and Perkins' brewery; and some person individually interested in the victims, roused the workmen into mobbing him, so that his life was almost in danger. He declined to identify the men who assaulted him, so that there could be no prosecution, but the Austrian Government demanded an apology. Lord Palmerston submitted his answer to the Queen and Lord John Russell, who both disapproved of one paragraph in it, and were greatly displeased to find that it had already gone to the Austrian Ambassador before they had seen it. They insisted on its revocation, upon which he threatened to resign, but finally submitted and withdrew the note, but Austria did not soon forget the affront, and would not take part in the Great Exhibition.

As to the demonstration of the brewers, Prince Albert wrote:—

* "We in London have, in the Haynau demonstration, also had a slight foretaste of what an unregulated mass of illiterate people is capable—'*le peuple souverain*,' which likes to be accuser, witness, judge, and executioner, all in one. '*Qui est le peuple souverain?*' asked the great Lamartine, and then made answer, '*Le peuple souverain est le peuple dont il est dit que la voix du peuple est la voix de Dieu.*' "

The adverse feeling of the nation towards that first idea of the Crystal Palace was in a great degree caused by a certain jealousy of the Prince's position, and a

rooted idea that he liked to interfere in everything. No doubt this partly actuated Lord Palmerston in his resistance to submitting despatches to the Queen. But in marked contrast to this sentiment were the Prince's relations with the Duke of Wellington, whom both he and the Queen always treated with reverence and affection, making him godfather to their third son, who was born on his birthday, May 1st, 1850. The Duke, who saw better than most persons where real conscientious and disinterested power lay, in view of his own great age, was very desirous that Prince Albert should be appointed Commander-in-Chief at once, but he wisely declined. Want of military experience was his first objection, but to this the Duke replied, that "honest hard work" would suffice for what was required; the next was, that in case of insurrection, it would fall to the Commander-in-Chief to repress it by force, and unpopularity thus incurred would fall on the Queen; and, moreover, the assistance that, as private secretary, he afforded to the Queen, could not be dispensed with, and would prevent his giving the "honest hard work" that the Duke talked of. The thing was not decided without full consultation, and much against the old Field-Marshal's wishes, was determined with the Queen's approval. As a wife, she well knew that the Prince was so thorough in whatever he undertook, that such an addition to his duties would be absolutely overwhelming, unless the more important

private aid which he rendered to her were given up. He would never be content to be a mere nominal commander-in-chief, and the toil to be an actual one would be beyond human power, when added to his present occupations. The appointment would certainly have been unwelcome to a larger portion of the nation than either the Duke or the royal pair supposed, and any changes, whether judicious or otherwise, that the Prince might have made, would have been looked on with prejudice; so that the decision was in every way prudent.

The next anxiety was caused by the Roman appointment of bishops to English Sees—not the original ones held by the English hierarchy, but freshly-created ones, giving title to those prelates of the Roman communion who had hitherto ministered in England with dioceses of strange names, "*in partibus infidelium.*" It was a more absolute disavowal of the English Church than Rome had yet ventured on, and it created a sensation now felt to have been disproportionate. High Churchmen felt it as an insult, and Protestants imagined that the aggression was the prelude to all the ills of the Papacy overspreading England, while the self-gratulation of some of the Roman Catholic clergy, and their auguries of the future, added to the alarm. Lord John Russell, in the midst of it, wrote and published his foolish letter laying the blame of encouraging the advance of

Rome on the Tractarian party. Prince Albert himself was impelled by the general excitement to write a memorandum, proving how little his Lutheran education had qualified him to understand the Church and her position.

Leave for introducing the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, as it was called, was granted by a large majority from both parties, but the two sides of the House were so evenly balanced that the offence given to the Irish members as Roman Catholics was fatal, and on the introduction of a Government Bill for equalizing the franchise in town and country the Ministry were left in such a minority that they felt bound to resign, and great perplexities ensued. Lord Aberdeen was sent for, as representative of the Peelites, but he knew that he could not retain a majority if he declined to deal with Papal aggression; and Lord Stanley, who was next called for, as the head of the Conservatives, could not secure the co-operation of the Peelite statesmen. The dilemma was great, and the advice of the Duke of Wellington was thought desirable. He was at Stratfieldsaye, and, while awaiting his return, the Prince drew up a summary of the situation, clearly dealing with the difficulties on either side.

The three questions were:—

1. Protection.
2. The extension of the franchise.
3. Papal aggression.

On the first and second, the Peelites and Whigs were against the Conservatives; but on the third, Peelites and Radicals, together with 60 Irish, were against the Whigs and Conservatives. In this complication the Queen and Prince wished for a coalition of Whigs and Peelites in the Ministry, leaving the ecclesiastical titles an open question, unconnected with party; but this was found to be impracticable, and the Duke would not advise it, so that nothing could be done but for the Whig Ministry to continue, softening down the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill into merely declaring their assumption illegal, but attaching no penalty; so that it became a dead letter.

In fact, every one's mind was too full of the Crystal Palace to dwell much on politics, or, as a cartoon in *Punch* put it, the shipwrecked Ministry were taken on board the Great Exhibition steamer.

Yet, even in the debate on the Address, at the opening of Parliament, Colonel Sibthorp had uttered a prayer that some hail storm or visitation of lightning might descend to defeat the ill-advised project in Hyde Park. When the foreigners should come, he warned the people to beware of thieves and pickpockets. "Take care," he said, "of your wives and daughters; take care of your lives and property!"

Nevertheless, the building had been finished in January, and was a perfect success in beauty and grace, unrivalled

by any of its successors, partly because they have been so much more extensive, and therefore unwieldly, and less admirably proportioned.

The Prince was toiling night and day at the preparations. On March 27th, he writes to his brother: "Yesterday we came back from Osborne, where we were nearly washed away by the rain. To-day begins the unpacking in the Exhibition, and it is to be hoped that at the same time ends the debate on the Papal question, and the priestly rabble get a trump." Then he tells him to prepare for a visit in May, "if he is not afraid of the throng."

The Crystal Palace was being filled and arranged, but the anxieties were far from ended. In a letter of April 15th, the Prince says:—

"Just at present I am more dead than alive from overwork. The opponents of the Exhibition work with might and main to throw all the old women into panic, and to drive myself crazy. The strangers, they give out, are certain to commence a thorough revolution here, to murder Victoria and myself, and to proclaim the Red Republic in England; the plague is certain to ensue from the confluence of such multitudes, and to swallow up those whom the increased price of everything has not already swept away. For all this I am to be responsible, and against all this I have to make efficient provision."

The diplomatists representing absolute powers likewise hung back, their sovereigns fearing that their subjects should become enamoured of English institutions; and thus they declined to combine in an address to the

Queen. They, therefore, were only to be present at the opening, bow, and stand aside.

There were days of incessant worry and trouble, needing the utmost patience and good temper, and full of harass from warnings of possible attacks on the Queen's life, or popular outbreaks of the vast crowds assembled in the park. But when the great May-day came, the splendour of the opening, the beauty of the scene, the enthusiasm of the people, made up for all that had gone before. The success was brilliant beyond all anticipations, and the joy, the good order, and loyalty of all filled the royal couple with delight.

After leading in the Queen, with the two eldest of their children, and joining in the dedicatory service, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Prince Albert, as the head of the Commissioners, read their report, to which the Queen replied. She afterwards called this the happiest day of her happy life, and probably it was that of glad triumph least mingled with anxiety or sorrow. As she wrote in reply to Lady Lyttelton's congratulations:—

"To see this great conception of my beloved husband's mind, which, is always labouring for the good of others—to see this great thought and work crowned with triumphant success, in spite of difficulties and opposition of every imaginable kind, and of every effort which jealousy and calumny could resort to cause its failure, has been an immense happiness to us both. But to me, the glory of his dear name linked with the glory of my dear country, which shone more than she has ever done on that great day, is a source of pride, happi-

ness and thankfulness which none but a wife's heart can comprehend."

It was a work, which not only owed its origin to the Prince, but which could never have been accomplished without his constant patience, perseverance, good temper, and vigilance, through disappointments and annoyances which, as his brother tells us, went far beyond what have been recorded. Here is the Duke of Coburg's account of the impression it made:—

"None of all the innumerable similar undertakings which were carried out, either in single countries or for the whole world, which I have seen and visited, could in any way venture on a comparison with that first London Exhibition. All and each that was to be seen was new, and from the point of view of entire originality had a strong effect on the spectators. It was, besides, the last great opportunity that the English aristocracy have had of making an effort, and once again to appear in all their grandeur. The high nobility undertook the representation of England in a manner such as there has since been no occasion for. All their splendour and pomp was displayed as if it had been part of the Exhibition. Later Expositions have had a more *bourgeois*, more industrial character—this first in London was preponderatingly aristocratic. At the opening, four thousand gala carriages appeared, and almost daily the nobility were to be met in all the departments. The Queen and her husband were at the zenith of their fame.

"The more people had striven to prophesy the greatest dangers from the collection of such masses of mankind, the more they had dreaded and threatened revolutionary attempts: so much the more striking was the tribute of honour paid to the royal pair by the millions who visited London in the course of nearly six months. The Court was extraordinarily hospitable, and showed itself on this occasion both brilliant and large-hearted. Prince Albert was not satisfied to guide the whole affair only from above; he was, in the fullest sense of the word, the soul of everything.

"Even his bitterest enemies, with unusual unreserve, acknowledged

the completeness of the execution of the scheme; and I here take up from the papers devoted from full hearts to his memory, a good word on this subject from a German admirer of my brother, who says, 'The prosperity and results of the enterprise, to which even a financial profit was secured, and especially the establishment of future general benefits therefrom, was always bound up with the thoughts of the too early deceased Prince, and thus the monument erected to him by his royal widow fitly stands in the neighbourhood of the spot where he enjoyed the purest triumph of his life. A disciple of Peel as a statesman of congenial spirit in practical ability and noble taste, he was able to breathe his own idea into the work, whose effects have truly been felt from New Zealand to California.'

"Indeed the great world's fair was not without political influence. The countless princes who found themselves in London carried away impressions diametrically opposed to the course of Absolutism, which had lately been taken up on the Continent. Even in personal reference, it was not unimportant, that so many of the German powers should be convinced, that the liberal tendencies which my brother had so energetically defended and unreservedly asserted against every one, might lead to such very practical results.

"Nor must I forget to mention how especially the Prince of Prussia, who had been present at the opening, spoke with enthusiasm of my brother's success, and how he described the favourable impression which this civilising movement had made. He said his feelings were much moved to see the welfare of the working classes cared for in the highest ranks of society."

And not only the opening, but the continuation of the undertaking fully justified the design by proving successful beyond all anticipation. The whole nation was carried away by eagerness to behold the World's Fair, and to become possessed of memorials of it, and so far from the guarantees being called for, there was actually half a million of profit; and a precedent was established which all considerable commercial countries have continued to imitate.

The third jubilee of the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel took place while the Exhibition was in its prime. Prince Albert was requested to preside at the Commemoration. Characteristically, he made it a condition that nothing should be said that could give offence to any denomination of Christians. His own speech was a matter of anxiety, and was very carefully framed; dwelling on the civilizing power of Christianity, and only lamenting that the Church should be afflicted by internal dissensions, and attacks from without. "I have no fear, however," he said, "for her safety and ultimate welfare, so long as she holds fast to what our ancestors gained for us at the Reformation, the Gospel, and the unfettered right of its use."

It was held that the speech had been a very prudent and guarded one, Lord John Russell pronounced that he had left "nothing unsaid that ought to be said, and nothing said that ought to be avoided."

On October 17th the Exhibition was finally closed, not without feelings of regret, as if the culminating point of prosperity had been reached, and a fresh page about to be turned. The proceeds were, under the Prince's wish, employed in securing ground at South Kensington, on which a great National Institute might be built. This was not accomplished without great anxiety. The agent employed for the purchase, being unaware of what was designed, agreed to take the land on a building

lease, binding his clients to raise dwelling-houses on it; and how in honour to be free from this clause was a great perplexity, robbing the Prince of rest and appetite. The Queen was so sympathising and encouraging, that he quoted the verse from a German song called "The Tear":—

> "When man has well-nigh lost his hope in life,
> Upwards in trust and love still looks the wife,
> Towards the starry world all bright with cheer,
> Faint not nor fear, thus speaks her shining tear."

Ultimately the owner entered into a new covenant, and the matter was settled.

The long annoyances with Lord Palmerston had begun again. Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, had been released from captivity in Austria, and visited England on his way to America. He was really a brave and honest man, and the Liberals of various places welcomed him enthusiastically, Lord Palmerston proposed to receive him as a guest, and this, coming upon the Haynau disturbance, so incensed the Austrian Government that it was known, that if this were done, their ambassador would be recalled. At first, Lord Palmerston stood upon his rights to receive any guest he chose at his private residence, and though he yielded this to strong representation, he did consent to receive deputations with addresses at the Foreign Office, thanking him for having interfered on behalf of the illustrious exile, and speaking

of the Emperors of Austria and Russia as odious and detestable assassins, and merciless tyrants and despots.

The Queen was greatly displeased. As she said, it was not the question "whether she pleases the Emperor of Austria or not, but whether she gives him just cause of complaint." All the Cabinet entirely concurred in her feeling of the strange imprudence of an official manifesting such sympathy with insurgents against a sovereign with whom the country was at peace.

Upon this came the tidings of Louis Napoleon's *Coup d'état* at Paris, and even while the Queen was directing that her ambassador, Lord Normanby, should remain perfectly passive, and manifest no opinion on the proceedings, Lord Palmerston personally assured the French ambassador, Count Walewski, of the entire approval of the English Government. Lord John Russell was really indignant, and there was no choice but to request Lord Palmerston's resignation. Lord Granville was sworn into his office on December 27, 1851. It was extremely annoying that this dismissal was ascribed by the Liberals, and by Palmerston himself, to "a weak truckling to the hostile intrigues" of the foreign Courts. The Russian ambassador, Baron Brunnow, thought it necessary to disavow having used any influence, and this the Queen pronounced, in a note to Lord John Russell, to have been "very presuming, as it insinuates

the possibility of changes of Government in this country taking place at the instigation of foreign ministers."

The old Duke, discussing the matter with the Prince, entirely approved. "There never went a paper," he said, "which I had not brought to me first; but Lord Palmerston could at no time be trusted, as he was always anxious to do things for himself."

This is the way in which the matter appeared to the Duke of Coburg, at once an outsider as being a foreigner, and, on the other side, as his brother's confidant:—

"Prince Albert had, by the influence which he exercised in a very yielding manner, not improved his position towards the self-willed Minister for Foreign Affairs; but it was a matter of conscience with him, to defend the views of the Crown against any individual member of the Cabinet. Thus came about the well-known dismissal of Palmerston, which, in the history of the English Constitution, has become an important proof, that a Minister, even in England, can be overthrown by other influences than Parliamentary majorities or minorities.

"That in these circumstances my brother greatly rejoiced in Lord Palmerston's resignation, is certain, but I can entirely prove from his full correspondence, that nothing could be more false, as was supposed on the Continent, than that the Prince in his opposition to the fomenters of continental revolutions had at least given up his objections to reactionary governments. Nothing could be more untrue than such an asseveration, for if my brother's whole relations with Lord Palmerston are pointed to, it must rather be said that the only thing that had united them was their common dislike of certain persons and institutions.

"'I cannot,' wrote Albert at the end of the year, 'blame myself for what has passed. The Great Exhibition which caused the endless difficulties and cares has turned out fortunately and honourably beyond belief without the smallest *contre-temps* to lament. And the

year further closed happily for me, in that the man who has embittered our whole life, and often placed us in the disgraceful alternatives of either avowing his misdeeds in the face of all Europe, or of raising or increasing the power of the Radical party by his leadership so as to occasion an open strife with the Crown, and thus to hurl the only land in which freedom's order and law prevail into the general chaos, has himself cut his own throat. 'Give a rogue rope enough and he will hang himself,' is an old English proverb with which we have often tried to console ourselves, and which has been verified in this case. We shall still have various troubles with Palmerston (who rages), and especially with the Reform Bill, which is promised, and in the judicious issue of which all Europe is concerned.'"

These were hard words spoken in irritation, and which probably would have been retracted later; but it was quite true that Lord Palmerston had dabbled in foreign revolution enough to make his name a by-word of hatred to friends of foreign governments. Travellers have told stories of being misused by petty officials, under the belief that the title of Palmerston on their passports was their own name, and Lady Georgiana Fullerton mentions the extreme disapprobation of her Roman friends when justice compelled her to state that their *bête noir* was a kindly amiable man in private life.

No wonder Prince Albert felt bitterly that England was held responsible for what the Queen strenuously disapproved, but could not prevent. The Prince never visibly interfered in this painful question, but throughout he was strengthening the resolution of the Queen and Prime Minister:—

"Albert," wrote the Queen to her uncle shortly after, "grows daily fonder and fonder of politics and business, and is wonderfully fit for

both, showing such perspicuity and courage, and I grow daily to dislike them both more and more. We women are not made for governing, and, if we are good women, we must dislike these masculine occupations. But there are times which force one to take interest in them *bon gré, mal gré*, and of course therefore I feel this interest now intensely."

The special anxiety at that moment was the state of the national defences, with a view to a possible war with France, since it was assumed that a Bonaparte was sure to inherit the policy of hostility to England. A Militia Bill was in hand, but the Prince was anxious to add to it a reserve force, and wrote to the Duke proposing that a seventh of each regiment should yearly retire, and remain subject to being called out periodically for drill and practice, recruits taking their place. The Duke did not approve, because he was unwilling to lose elder men, on whom he had been accustomed to rely for steady firmness in all critical moments. The Duke would have recurred to the old Militia, who had not been called out for many years, but the Government brought in a Bill for a local Militia, to be called out every year, but not taken beyond their own counties.

This was strenuously opposed, especially by Palmerston. Government was defeated by a majority of eleven, and Lord John Russell's resignation followed. The Conservatives came into power, with the Earl of Derby at their head, and Disraeli as leader in the House of Commons:—

"Lord Derby," wrote Prince Albert, on March 10th, "is a distinguished man, but he calls his own ministry 'The Derbyshire militia' fresh from the plough, ready to be disbanded immediately. Not one of them has been in any public office, 'they are people never heard of before,' said the old Duke. This phrase must only be looked on as a passing one, and we are chiefly working that it may produce something solid and strong, in the meantime conducing to the bringing together political parties divided by the final and irreliable removal of Protection and the question of Free Trade. For this a dissolution in June will be needful.

"In the meantime our defences will be regulated, and the militia of 120,000 men, which has existed from 1628 to 1853, will be brought forward. Also a naval reserve, and the strengthening of the artillery, and fortifications of the ports.

"The navy is in the best condition."

A Militia Bill was brought in accordingly, providing for 80,000 men, on the lines of the old Militia, to be enrolled for five years at a time, and annually assembled for training. The Prince, meanwhile, showed his plan for a reserve force, and it was kept in mind, and some years after partially adopted.

The dissolution of Parliament followed, and the new elections left the balance of parties much as it was before. The recess gave a pleasant holiday-time, spent in yachting, in a visit to King Leopold, and ending in Scotland, whither came the tidings of the death of the great man whom the Queen with the Prince had loved and trusted above all her subjects. To Colonel Phipps the Prince wrote :—

"That the old Duke should be no more, is one of those truths which it will require a long time before one can believe. What the country has lost in him, what we personally have lost, it is almost im-

possible to estimate. It is as if in a tissue, a particular thread, which was worked into every pattern, was suddenly withdrawn. The Duke was the link which kept us in connection with a century which has passed before us."

A few days later, in answer to Stockmar, he says:—

"Your appeal to me to replace the Duke for the country and the world shall stimulate me to fresh zeal in the fulfilment of my duties. The position of being merely the wife's husband in the eyes of the public, is naturally an unfavourable one, inasmuch as it presupposes inferiority, and makes it necessary to demonstrate, which can only be done by deeds, that no such inferiority exists. Now, silent influence is precisely that which operates to the greatest and wisest good, and therefore much time must elapse before the value of that influence is recognised by those who can take cognizance of it, while by the mass of mankind it can scarcely be understood at all. I must content myself with the fact that constitutional monarchy marches unassailably on its beneficent course, and that the country prospers and makes progress."

The Prince certainly showed his wisdom in feeling that he could not take the place of the veteran warrior and statesman whom he followed to the grave, at St. Paul's, amidst the tears of the whole nation, representatives of both the Services, and distinguished envoys from all the European nations, excepting Austria, which could not pardon the attack upon Haynau.

On the reassembling of Parliament, came the defeat of the Government upon Disraeli's Budget, the resignation of the short-lived Derby Ministry, and the coming in of the Coalition, with Lord Aberdeen at its head, and Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Aberdeen was a personal friend at the palace, and this

Government was hailed by the Prince with great hope and satisfaction, though he always endeavoured to avoid showing any personal bias. A German friend of the Princess Hohenlohe thus described him:—

"Prince Albert is one of the few royal personages who can sacrifice to any principle (as soon as it has become evident to them to be good and noble) all those notions (as sentiments) to which others, owing to their narrow-mindedness, as to the prejudices of their rank, are so thoroughly strongly to cling. He knows right well that princes live for the benefit of the people, and that the people must not be looked upon as the hereditary property of the princes. And happy is he for that conviction!"

There can be no doubt that Prince Albert was one of the most conscientious and virtuous, pure-minded men who ever existed, and that the title of "Albert the Good" was justly bestowed on him. That he was thoroughly lovable is also plain, from the impression he made on all in immediate contact with him, from his own family outwards, as it may be said. He was perfectly truthful, and all that he did, either personally or in behalf of the nation, was on high principles of right. No one repudiated more in heart and life the old theory that the same honour and sincerity were not required in a State affair as in private life. Moreover, his beneficence and desire for improvement in all classes, was unfailing. He attended to the interests of the labourers on his estate, gave libraries to various institutions—always selecting the books himself—and spared neither time nor pains to make his work thorough.

The routine of his day at this time was to rise at seven, read and answer letters, draw up memoranda, or drafts of papers for the Queen or Council. He had from the first insisted on early hours, for which the Queen has since expressed her thankfulness, and by the nine o'clock breakfast he had attended to much important business.

At breakfast, he mastered the contents of the leading newspapers; communicating the pith of them to the Queen. Then came a short walk with her, if he were not going out shooting or hunting; but he never stayed out more than a couple of hours, or a little more, walking very fast, and saying he could not understand making it the business of the day. Cabinet Councils, or expeditions to attend to the many institutions with which he was connected, varied the morning, but he always, if possible, gave the time before luncheon to the Queen, while she told him all she had heard, or showed him letters. Luncheon followed, and he went out, generally with the Queen. Then there were interviews with all sorts of people till dinner time, when he made himself lively and pleasant to his guests.

Visits were often made to the theatre in the evening, but always ending early with a view to the morning hours. Even in the country his days were full of occupation. Public business could not be entirely laid aside, but the model farms, the buildings and the landscape gardening were a delight. Balmoral became

a castle, with plantations around it, and at Osborne the grounds were laid out by the Prince, and a farm added to them, which he so managed as to be no plaything but a success, and a real benefit to all around. Work was found for labourers in time of need upon improvements, but at harvest time the extra hands were paid off, that they might work for others. And both there and at Windsor, a good, though not unreasonably high, standard of character was required. The whole place was a delight to the Prince, who could here be at perfect ease with his little children, enjoy his gardens and plantations unhampered; and listen to the songs of the birds, challenging the nightingale with his whistle, which was sure to evoke an answer.

In the June of 1853, the Duke and Duchess of Coburg paid a visit to England on business connected with the internal affairs and constitution of the Duchy of Gotha. On the exact proposition there is no need to dwell, but it was one on which the two brothers differed. "The discussion, at which the Duke's Minister, Seebach, assisted, took place in Stockmar's apartment. The Baron listened silently to the argument, and presently said to the Duke, "You are right, the Prince is wrong, and will soon yield."

The argument, however, continued till the arrival of a messenger from the Queen, to whom the Prince had to speak. All the time Stockmar, who had been

sitting with his eyes shut, apparently not attending, but when Prince Albert before going away, turned and said, "It is impossible to decide until I have well considered the matter," the adviser rose and going up to him said, "My Prince, you have considered the matter already. I know you well enough to be certain that you had already decided before the Minister's statement on the position you would take up. Therefore say so, for you will say the same to-morrow." The Prince smiled, gave the Baron his hand, and said, So! to-morrow—the Chamber." Which was in fact the ministerial proposal, to which he gave his assent the next day, founding it on a former memorandum of the Minister.

The brothers had much besides to discuss. In Portugal, Queen Maria de Gloria was dying, and their cousin Ferdinand was appointed Regent for his young son Pedro. There were many visitors to the Court that summer, the Duke of Genoa, the King and Queen of Hanover, and the Prince and Princess of Prussia. The Duke of Genoa (brother of Victor Emanuel) was greatly liked and esteemed by the Royal Family, who, though averse to revolution, had strong feelings in favour of the Italians under alien dominion. When the Queen presented him with a handsome charger, she said: "I hope you will ride this horse when a battle is fought for Italian liberty."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CRIMEAN WAR.

1853-1856.

The camp at Chobham—Imminence of war—Prince Albert's view of the Vienna Note—Declaration of war by Turkey—Our position as auxiliaries—A letter to the Duke of Coburg—The Czar's correspondence with the Queen—The Sinope disaster—Lord Palmerston's resignation—Attacks on the Prince—His annoyance—Refutation of the calumnies against him—The indecision of Russia—The Prince's estimate of English feeling—The vacillation of Prussia—Commencement of the war—Count Vizthum and Prince Albert—A visit to the Emperor—Records of the conversations—The Emperor's impressions—Progress of the war—The Prince presses on reinforcements—Fall of the Aberdeen Ministry—Calumnies against the Prince—Death of the Czar—The Emperor's visit to England—A letter to the Duke of Coburg—The death of Lord Raglan—Fall of Sebastopol—Visit of Prince Frederick William—The projected marriage—Its reception by the press—The Prince's military arrangements—A letter to Prince Frederick William—His character—The Prince on the prospects of peace—The Treaty of Paris—Confirmation of the Princess Royal.

CLOUDS were gathering over Europe which foretold war, and the English army was so far in course of preparation, that for the first time for many years a camp for exercise and training was assembled at Chobham. Prince Albert was there on two of the first field days with

his brother and the King of Hanover, but then was laid up with an attack of measles, which extended to the whole family except the youngest children. It was not till August that the Royal Family were able again to visit the camp, which (on the Queen's authority), was the result of the Prince's assiduous and unceasing representations to the late and the existing government. The fleet, too, had been greatly reinforced, and at a naval review in the summer of 1853, was pronounced the finest that England had ever fitted out, and for this, likewise, the Prince had unofficially been working.

That war could not be averted was beginning to be felt. To enter into the details is needless here, except so far as they personally connect themselves with the subject of this biography. The underlying gist of the matter was the fixed determination of Russia, lasting through many generations, to become mistress of Turkey. The actual opening of the quarrel was regarding the custody of the Holy places in Palestine, which the French demanded on behalf of the Latin Church, the Russians on behalf of the Greek; and the Czar subsequently claimed to be acknowledged as the protector of the fourteen millions of Greek Christians, scattered throughout the Turkish dominions.

Turkey had been an ally of England since the great Napoleonic war, and it would have been dishonourable to permit claims that would have been

tantamount to her ruin, besides that to allow the huge Empire of Russia to have the command of the Archipelago was felt to be most perilous to the balance of power in Europe. A conference of the representatives of the four Powers of Europe — England, France, Austria, and Prussia — was held, and what was called the Vienna Note was drawn up, and forwarded to Russia and to Turkey for acceptance as an honourable settlement. It was accepted by Russia but declined by Turkey, on the ground that the Russian interpretation of it was not that which was intended by the framers. Prince Albert's view was:—

"We can, however, no longer urge the acceptance of the Vienna Note, which has proved to be a trap set by Meyendorff through Buol. We dare, moreover, no longer believe the protestations of the Emperor Nicholas, that the question at issue is a point of honour, an ultimatum which does not admit of change, a new acknowledgment of old rights. All that is at an end.

"But now, how to avoid a European war? For only with the most dishonourable cowardice on the part of the Powers could the demands be conceded by them which are now set up. . . . I cannot disguise from you that the course of the whole affair has done Aberdeen infinite injury with the public, and the outcry against him and Clarendon will soon become loud, *unjustly* so, but the mass of mankind judges only after the event. Aberdeen is quite right, and is to be honoured and applauded for maintaining as he does, that we must treat with our enemies as honourable men, and deal honourably towards them; but that is no reason why we should think they are so in fact; this is what he does, and it is right to do so."

This was written on September 27th. On October 5th, another letter to Stockmar says:—

"The Turks have declared war. What will the four Powers do? By this, our mediation policy is knocked on the head. We cannot look on and see the Porte destroyed by Russia; active assistance is European war—if it succeeds then fanatical oppression of the Christians in the East becomes in the ascendant! To leave the Porte in the lurch is death to the Ministry, to declare war is not much else!"

In this perplexity, when every step was a difficulty, the sending the English and French fleets into the Ægean Sea was much censured, as being a step nearer war. The Prince drew up one of his memorandums, weighing the probabilities, and especially dwelling on this caution:—

"In acting as auxiliaries to the Turks, we ought to be quite sure that they have no object in view *foreign* to our duty and interests; that they do not drive at war whilst we aim at peace; that they do not, instead of merely resisting the attempt of Russia to obtain a Protectorate over the Greek population incompatible with their own independence, seek to obtain themselves the power of imposing a more oppressive rule of two millions of fanatic Mussulmans over twelve millions of Christians, that they do not try to turn the tables on the weaker power, now that, backed by England and France, they have themselves become the stronger. There can be little doubt, and it is very natural, that the fanatical party at Constantinople, should have such views, but to engage our fleet as an auxiliary force for such purposes, would be fighting against our own interests, policy, and feelings." The paper ended by declaring that if England took part in the war, the peace concluding it should secure "arrangements consonant with the well-understood interests of Europe, of Christianity, liberty, and civilisation."

To this Aberdeen, Clarendon, and Russell assented, but Palmerston thought any improvement of Turkey a chimerical idea, and disbelieved the stories of increased fanaticism.

"You are right," wrote Prince Albert on October 20th, 1853, to his brother, "in anxiously enquiring into the state of European politics. They look very bad and solely depend on whether the Emperor Nicholas will have war or not. That he chooses the forbidden thing can be no longer doubtful after Nesselrode's explanation. But we do not know whether he is ready to reckon on an European war. Much will depend on how the Powers range themselves. And the recent unlucky scene in Berlin is, in this respect, the most favourable thing that could have happened for the preservation of peace. The Emperor wanted to form an offensive and defensive alliance with Austria and Prussia against England and France. In other words, that Germany should again pay the score for his coveted objects in the East. Austria withstood, Prussia fell into the trap. The Emperor summoned the King to Warsaw, he came, he had worked him up to extreme rage against France (which was quite quiet and pacific through the whole affair), but he was thwarted by the firmness of Manteufel, who declared that neither now nor ever would he depart from the Prussian policy of neutrality.

"We have often been constrained to an *Entente cordiale** with Louis Napoleon. It is useful to him, for at Paris there is much greed of money-making. The Emperor is often passive—in short, over there they are in an unusually quiet and yielding mood towards us. Here, the nation is indignant with Russia, but determined to keep the peace as long as possible. Our fleets (combined) have orders forcibly to prevent any attack on the Turkish coast, but fresh attempts at mediation will be made, based on the Treaty of 1841, including the latest Russian declarations of Olmutz, avoiding the rocks which Reschid Pasha has discovered in the Vienna Note with respect to the treaties of Kainardji and Adrianople. It is further decided that the Porte shall be threatened that, if it refuses an equitable adjustment, it shall be left in the lurch. I am for this, because the mad fanatics, building upon our help, play the most foolish tricks, so that the actual declaration of war, acknowledged to be so grievous, may, whether right or wrong, come in a moment, and probably their war will be one in which we shall not act for love of them, but shall be forced to take their part for our own interest, and that of all Europe. Especially we cannot let Constantinople be taken by the Russians. The difficulties are enormous, not less with our present mixed Cabinet than with Russia.

* The "ancient cordial," as the soldiers called it.

. . . . An honourable and manly demonstration by Austria would make an equitable and peaceful settlement of the struggle possible in a moment."

There was a personal correspondence between the Czar and the Queen, in which the former implored Her Majesty's good faith and wisdom, to judge between him and the English Government. As the Prince described her answer—"Victoria has sat in judgment, but her judgment must go against her Imperial brother;" who, meanwhile, was publishing war-like manifestoes to his own subjects, making his intentions plain.

In the midst came the catastrophe at Sinope, when, on November 30th, the Turkish fleet on the way to Batoum, was utterly and savagely destroyed by a Russian squadron from Sebastopol, under the impression that it was on the way to excite an insurrection in Circassia. The outrage filled England with wrath and indignation, not only against the aggressor, but because Aberdeen was supposed to have been bought over by Russia, and Prince Albert to be no less devoted to Russian interest, and paralyzing the Government. The fact seems to have been that if an English fleet were to be sent into the Turkish waters so as to irritate Russia it ought to have been large enough to protect the Turks against such an attack, and that this had not been done was on account of the desire to avoid war.

In this perplexity, Palmerston's resignation occurred.

"The state of politics," writes the Prince, "is quite insane. No one will believe the true cause of his retirement, his dislike of Lord John's plan of reform, and treachery is everywhere the cry."

Indeed treachery was freely imputed. It was even whispered that Lord Palmerston had resigned because he detected Prince Albert in betraying State secrets to foreign Courts. Well might the Prince write—"The stupidest trash is babbled to the public, so stupid that (as they say in Coburg) you would not give it to the pigs for litter."

On the 19th, the Prince wrote:—

"I do not yet give up the hope of enforcing peace, but the want of sense in both Russians and Turks is incredible. One element of war disappeared from the Cabinet yesterday in Palmerston, yet purely on a home question. The great Liberal braggart, who wanted to press free constitutions on every country, finds the Reform Measure which Aberdeen approves too liberal. What mischief that man has done us! A resignation naturally weakens the Ministry, and gives the Protectionists and Ultra-Tories a leader in the Lower House, from which height it is probably his intention to force himself on us as Premier one of these days."

However, as the Cabinet remained unshaken, and Palmerston found that Lord Lansdowne would not follow his example, he withdrew his resignation. The public insisted on believing that it was Prince Albert's treason to the country which had caused the retirement, and there were a series of bitter and ignorant attacks upon the Prince in the papers, which greatly grieved and

annoyed him, and affected his health. Just then the Lord Mayor proposed to erect a statue of him in the Park, in commemoration of the Great Exhibition, and there were those who fancied that he had himself proposed it, whereas in his own words to Lord Granville :—

"I can say, with perfect absence of humbug, that I would much rather not be made the prominent feature of such a monument, as it would both disturb my quiet rides in Rotten Row to see my own face staring at me, and if, as is very likely, it became an artistic monstrosity like most of our monuments, it would upset my equanimity to be permanently ridiculed and laughed at in effigy."

In the present state of feeling, everything the Prince did or said was misunderstood by either Protectionists or Radicals, and with very bitter feelings did the Prince write to his brother :—

"Here the rage for war has reached a pitch that I should hardly have thought possible. The public has kindly made me the scape-goat for the war not having been begun, and *logically* says : 'The interests of the Coburg, Russian, Belgium, and Orleans families are fused together, and preferred to the alliance with Louis Napoleon. It is said that the Emperor rules England from Russia, he telegraphs to Gotha, you to Brussels, Uncle Leopold to me, I whisper into Victoria's ears, she openly drives old Aberdeen, and the voice of the only *English* Minister, Palmerston, is not listened to, but instead, he has been intrigued out of Court and Cabinet."

All this had to be borne in silence, unbroken except by a letter of Mr. Greville, Clerk of the Privy Council, explaining Prince Albert's position, and the effect of the Act of Naturalization, until the meeting of Parliament on January 31st, 1854, when Lord Aberdeen

among the Peers, and Lord John Russell in the Lower House undertook the defence, ably followed up by Lord Derby and by Mr. Walpole.

The public were made to face the truth that the Consort of a female sovereign could not be a mere cipher, that he actually was a Privy Councillor and her private secretary, and that his interests were naturally identical with hers, so that while it was absurd to suppose that he had no political influence, the ministry had it in their own hands to resign, if it were exercised in an unconstitutional manner. And the testimony of ex-ministers and actual ministers entirely upheld his entire loyalty, while Lord Campbell, from the legal point of view, proved his right to advise. The whole affair was a success. The Queen says to Stockmar:—

"I write to you in the fulness of joy at the triumphant refutation of all the calumnies in the two Houses of Parliament last night. The position of my beloved lord and master has been defined for *once and all*, and his merits have been acknowledged on all sides most duly." The Prince himself says: "The impression has been excellent, and my political status and activity, which up to this time have been silently assumed, have now been asserted in Parliament, and vindicated without a dissentient voice."

The imputations had been patiently and cheerfully borne, though both the husband and wife had suffered from them in health; and when it was found that Royalty was by no means backward in thoroughly taking up the defence of the weak and defiance of the strong,

the murmurs died away, though in point of fact the Prince was never popular in his own lifetime—

"The Emperor Nicholas," he writes on February 23rd, "has by his answer to Napoleon's letter, broken down the bridge, and recalled 1812. We are preparing. Whether Russia will undertake the war under such circumstances the gods alone know! The Emperor must be insane if he does so. But whether he does or not, the magic wand with which he ruled Mid-Europe is broken. The poor German kings who made it their pride to be his, may be sincerely pitied."

But all through the early part of the year the indecisions of Prussia were giving great anxiety. Frederick William was anxious not to break with his brother-in-law, and was manifestly attracted by his absolutism. His ambassador, Bunsen, the personal friend of Prince Albert, was recalled in May; and there was also, on grounds connected with the Government of Prussia and the retractation of his liberal measures, a breach with his brother William, the heir to the throne, faithful, honest, and resolute. The recall of Bunsen was especially alarming, as there was no doubt that it was on account of his anti-Russian sympathies; but for this there was some consolation—

"Bunsen's overthrow is known to you," says Prince Albert to his brother on May 2nd, "I can moreover completely partake your view that it is for the best, Bunsen is the absolute reverse of a diplomate. His best qualities are the most perilous in this respect; especially his incredible productiveness and imagination. In 1848, I saw at least five complete constitutions for Germany, and as many for Prussia, worked out by him to the smallest details, each one going on a different principle. His conquest and partition of Russia was a similar production. Thus I examined him as I happened to see it, with

regard to the Ernestine line and Poland, and asked him, 'Do not you see how all this compromises us, and what mischief this patriotic plan may do?' 'Ah! that is true, I am very sorry I had not thought of that,' was the answer. Bunsen will be much happier out of diplomacy, where I well know that he has often done harm."

On the 16th he writes again:—

"The Russian faction at Berlin has gained a complete victory, and thrown all *good* Germans and Prussians out of office. . . . . Nevertheless I believe that Austria has nothing to fear from Prussia, and can go forward reassured. I understand that in Vienna they will not entirely embrace the idea that there is a serious intention of war by the Western Powers, since the Russians cleverly make profit of these circumstances to bring German powers to this belief. In France, the war is really not popular. Here, on the contrary, the English are incredibly blood-thirsty against a power whose form of government and foreign policy they abhor. The opposition, which must always be on the popular side, has no weapons against the Ministry except a cry of lukewarmness with regard to the war, and especially to cast suspicion on Lord Aberdeen, who alone holds the Coalition together.

"It might make the Russians think lightly of the matter if they were to run over an article in the German press, to inform the Continental public that the Government is not in earnest about the war. The fact that ten millions of fresh taxes have been levied is a specimen of the earnestness. . . . . They are to be raised in the year, not on loan as in Prussia and France, and will be raised during the continuance of the war.

"Our necessity is caused by our prosperity. We can assemble no soldiers, sailors, nor ships. So enormous is traffic, industry, and export. It is frightful to look at the navy, as the men are all employed elsewhere. We have 40,000 sailors in America, 10,000 in Australia, &c. The war may come faster if the German powers do not join us. In a long struggle the fullest purse conquers, however the numerical strength of the armies may appear at first. We have already captured fifty ships, and destroyed twelve at Odessa. Russia is not to conquer but to blow up financially, to which the million and a half troops which she displays are conducing. If we could only get possession of Sebastopol! The Greek episode is dreadful, and shows that even Russia can cause revolution when it is useful to her."

Soon after the Prince writes:—

"Prussia, unhappy country! The King is the tool of Russian dictation, partly from fear of Russia, partly from an absurdly sentimental feeling for the Emperor as representative of the Holy Alliance. He believes himself to have shown great and dignified independence in declining a Russian alliance that could only have the one object of drawing Prussia into conflict with the Western Powers."

He clearly sums up the English feeling in a letter to King Leopold:—

"Another mistake which people make abroad is to ascribe to England a policy based upon material interests and cold calculation. Her policy is one of pure feeling, and therefore most illogical. The Government is a popular Government, and the masses upon whom it rests only feel and do not think. In the present instance their feeling is something of this sort: 'The Emperor of Russia is a tyrant, the enemy of all liberty on the Continent, the oppressor of Poland. He wanted to coerce the poor Turk. The Turk is a fine fellow, he has braved the rascal, let us rush to his assistance. The Emperor is no gentleman, he has spoken a lie to our Queen. Down with the Emperor of Russia! Napoleon for ever! He is the nephew of his uncle whom we defeated at Waterloo. We were afraid of his invading us? Quite the contrary. He has forgotten all that is past, and is ready to fight with us for the glorious cause against the oppressor of liberty. He may have played the French some tricks, but they are an unruly set and don't deserve any better. Hang all the German princes who won't go with us against the Russians, because they think they want him to keep down their own people. The worst of them is the King of Prussia, who ought to know better.'"

This is a fair picture of the popular spirit. Tennyson's poem, "Maude," shows the curious feeling that war would be a correction of many home evils, and a generation had grown up which recollected the glory of the former

great war, but did not recollect the sufferings which, in those times of imperfect and scanty communication, had been little brought to the knowledge of those "who lived at home at ease." There was great inexperience, too, in the needful preparations, and the few veterans who were in an effective condition had a far lower estimate of the needful comforts and appliances of a soldier's life than later civilisation has produced.

Heartily did the Queen and Prince throw themselves into the cause. As the former wrote to the vacillating and compromising Frederick William IV. of Prussia, in her English heart were deeply sunk the words:—

> "Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in't,
> Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee."

In the letter where this quotation occurs Prince Albert, no doubt, had his share. He was very indignant with the inconstancy, unreliableness, and what he called the "*unverstand*" of the King of Prussia, and the doubts of Austria were almost equally harassing; while even Lord Aberdeen felt as if this were a civil war, probably, as the Prince suggested, because in 1813–4 he was actually at Vienna, the head-quarters of the Allies against France. But this did not prevent him from (in the words of the Prince) "behaving in the same high-minded, courageous, and conciliatory spirit he has always shown":—

"My principal work," wrote the Prince, "is that our policy should manifest its firmness in uprightness and honour, in the judgment of others. This is the easier to attain in the first place as chiming in with the national character, but the next is much more difficult because of the character of an insular people to whom all knowledge of the Continent is alien, but it has to be considered by me. The Ministry gives us much trouble, Aberdeen is still in 1814, Palmerston in 1848, Lord John in 1830. The Parliament and Press are, all and sundry, at once born generals, and only require for the conquest of Russia by the army, which (as they say), is good for nothing, that the war ministry should be led by Palmerston, and the Court which kept Palmerston therefrom obstructed.

"What makes us very anxious is Marshal St. Arnaud, who is through and through a Chevalier d'Industrie, and in the hands of a certain T. The French themselves do not doubt that he is active in taking silver and paper roubles. We cannot induce the French army to advance till it has all its cavalry, which may last till the end of July."

The war had actually begun, the English and French troops were at Varna, and the question of attacking Russia in the Crimea was suggested by the French Emperor and considered in the Cabinet, and was the subject of a memorandum of the Prince, which was finished on June 29th. On that very day orders had been sent which made Lord Raglan feel that he had no alternative but to attack Sebastopol, though the Cabinet seems to have intended him to use his own judgment.

On July 16th, the Saxon ambassador, Count Vizthum, records a long conversation with Prince Albert on the attitude of the Courts of Vienna and Prussia after the Conference held at Bamberg. "England and France,"

he said, are to fight the battle alone, and leave to Germany the fruits of victory, the freedom of the Danube—

"All my attempts," says Vizthum, "to shake the false impression that a feeling of animosity against England prevailed at the German Courts was ineffectual. The answer I got was, that I had only to go there, and my candour would be put to the test on my return. It was not indeed denied that Lord Palmerston's vicious policy had been responsible for the coolness at present manifested in Germany against England, but on the other hand it must not be forgotten that the blunders committed by the German powers were now recoiling on themselves.

"The Prince showed himself very anxious as to the next day's meeting of Parliament. 'The continuance,' he said, 'of the present English Ministry—the best one, at any rate, now possible—depended on the Cabinet at Vienna. If that dangerous Palmerston came to the helm before Austria took action the latter would find in him the same inexorable enemy as in 1848.'

"Of Bonapartist France, the Prince spoke with a moderation and absence of prejudice now rarely met with in the leading circles of this country. In like manner he entertained no illusions about the success of the fleet then operating against Cronstadt. If fortune helped them, they would perhaps demolish some earthworks, but they could never capture either Cronstadt or St. Petersburg. The Russian men-of-war blockaded in those ports were, taken altogether, scarcely worth two millions and a half, and it would hardly pay to make any great sacrifice to destroy them. The capture of Sebastopol was the great object of the war, which, as the Prince repeated more than once, must be persevered in till attained."

Prince Albert decided on paying a visit in person to the Emperor of the French, who was to meet him at Boulogne, show him the army quartered there, and discuss the situation. He started on September 3rd, in the *Fairy*, with the Queen, whom he left at Spithead,

proceeding in the *Victoria and Albert.* The next day his despatch to the Queen was as follows:—

"We have arrived safely as the telegraph will have told you. The Emperor met me on the quay and brought me here in his carriage to an hotel at the back of the town near the railway station, but which looks more like an old French château, only two stories high, with long wings, a paved courtyard, and a grillage in front.

"The Emperor has been very nervous, if we are to believe what is said by those who stood near him and who know him best. He was kindly and cordial, does not look so old or pale as his portraits make him, and is much gayer than he is generally represented. This visit cannot fail to be a source of great satisfaction to him. He asked me at once if I could stay here till the 9th, which is the earliest day he can get the troops together for a great review. I assured him I must embark again on the evening of the 8th, and that this was the latest moment I could give him. You see, a shorter visit would have been a mistake. . . . I have had two long talks with the Emperor, in which he spoke very sensibly about the war, and the *question du jour.* People here are far from sanguine about the results of the expedition to the Crimea, very sensitive about the behaviour of Sir Charles Napier, scantily satisfied with Lord Stratford; nevertheless, so far as the Emperor is concerned, determined to consider the war and our alliance as the one thing paramount to which all other considerations must give place. To all complaints I have only replied that to carry public opinion with us in England is the main point (so far as consequences go), and that this is firmly rooted in support of the war, that Sir Charles Napier, Lord Stratford, and Lord Palmerston are the three persons who alone could carry on the war.

"September 5th.—Before I go to bed I must wish you good-night upon paper, even though the wish may be rather late in reaching your dear hands. I have to go out to-morrow morning by six, so there will be little time for writing. The Emperor thaws more and more. This evening, after dinner, I withdrew with him to his sitting-room for half an hour before rejoining his guests, in order that he might smoke his cigarette, in which occupation, to his amazement, I could not keep him company. He told me one of the deepest impressions ever made upon him, was, when having gone from France to Rio Janeiro, and thence to the United States, and been recalled to Europe by the

rumour of his mother's serious illness, he arrived in London shortly after King William's death, and saw you at the age of eighteen going to open Parliament for the first time."

Vizthum was at Boulogne at the time, and watched the Emperor driving the Prince in a phaeton so close to the sea that the breakers almost dashed into the carriage.

The Emperor was invited to England, and in return expressed hopes of welcoming the Queen in France, to see the Exhibition, with which the example of 1851 was being followed up.

The Prince, on his return, dictated a close account of his observations and conversations to General Grey. He thought the Emperor's "education very deficient, even on subjects which are a first necessity to him; I mean the political history of modern times, and political subjects generally. He appears to have thought much and deeply on politics, yet more like an 'amateur politician,' mixing many very sound and very crude notions together."

A curious conversation is further recorded, when the Emperor asked the cause of the Queen's objection to Lord Palmerston, who, he said, had always been "*très bon pour lui.*" Prince Albert suggested that this might partly be caused by the Minister's hatred to the Orleans family, and thence had to refer to the quarrel between Lord Palmerston and Louis Philippe, on the subject of intervention in the affairs of Spain, a meddle

with that country "had at all times brought ruin on France and the dynasty which undertook it."

The Emperor agreed to the axiom, though he was yet to add another example of its truth.

There was a discussion on finance, the Emperor leaning to indirect taxation, the Prince condemning indirect taxation as a principle, but acknowledging its necessity as a sacrifice to the weakness of human nature, which cannot bear to see the money go direct from the pocket of the individual to the coffers of the State, and particularly blaming the ever-recurring attempts of the French Government to control the price of bread.

"The Emperor declared this a necessity, as when bread was dear the people became ungovernable. The town of Paris had had to sacrifice sixteen millions of francs last year for that object, which he hoped to get back now after a plentiful harvest. I could not but express my doubts whether he would find it practicable to get back one shilling. As to the stability of the Government, nothing appeared to me so dangerous as to establish and acknowledge an immediate connection with it and the price of bread. He admitted this, but said there was no help for it."

After mentioning many other subjects talked over, the Prince thus sums up his account:—

"Upon the whole, the impression which my stay at Boulogne left upon me was that the Emperor would neither in home nor in foreign politics take any violent steps; but that he appears in distress for means of government, and obliged to look about for them from day to day. Having deprived the people of every active participation in the Government, and having reduced them to mere passive spectators, he is bound to keep up the spectacle, and as at fireworks, whenever a pause takes place between the different displays, the public immediately grows impatient, and forgets what it has just applauded."

The impression on the Prince's mind was that the Emperor was like a showman, the French spectators always looking for a fresh exhibition from him.

Educated and trained as Prince Albert had been, and with fourteen years of experience of actual government; being, moreover (as Disraeli said of him), not educated beyond his capacity, he could not but have greatly the advantage of Napoleon III., the creature of strange vicissitudes and chance education; but it is greatly to the credit of both that the Emperor was delighted as well as impressed. He was grateful for the manner in which the Prince had met him half way. He told Count Walewski that he had never learnt so much in a short time, and to the Duke of Coburg he afterwards said of the Prince: "*Il a l'esprit si juste qu'on a toujours peur d'entrer en discussion avec lui. Il a toujours raison.* One of the highest intelligences of the time." This was no small tribute from such a man as the Emperor, and the meeting did much to consolidate the alliance between the two countries.

The Prince returned to keep the autumn holiday at Balmoral, full of the anxieties and excitements of the Crimean Expedition. It was there that the news of the battle of the Alma was received, and there were hopes of an immediate assault and the capture of Sebastopol; but there was much disappointment when, soon after the return of the Court to Windsor, it was known that

the unwillingness of the French had prevented this, and that the difficulties of a regular siege would be great, giving time for the Russian army to arrive, and stretching into the darkness and cold of winter.

Then came the startling news of the Balaclava charge, showing as much blundering as daring, and anxiety became very great. The Prince especially dreaded that the length of the contest would bring on a general European war, and on this he wrote to King Leopold; while to the Ministers at home he urged the necessity of increasing our own available force by completing the Militia by ballot, and by enlisting a foreign legion.

In a letter to the Duke of Coburg, in the end of November, the Prince writes:—

"I owe you an answer for your kind letter of the 10th, but I can scarcely write, for I have only one thought of our heroes in the Crimea. The poor fellows endure much and behave wonderfully well (*bewunderswurdig*). At Inkermann 6,000 Englishmen held out two hours, then altogether 8,000 for four hours, and at last with a reinforcement of French, 14,000. These 14,000 men endured an attack by 60,000 Russians for nine hours altogether, and drove them back.

"The Russian dead, whom we had to bury, were 4,500. Multiplied by five as is the usual reckoning, so as to take an average of the wounded, this would show that the 14,000 men had put from 15,000 to 20,000 of the enemy *hors de combat*, a unique fact in military history. Of course we suffered enormously, for the Russians had brought sixty guns against us and a steamer with mortars. George* behaved excellently, poor Seymour is wounded in the hand, Sir George Cathcart is our greatest loss. One cannot call our undertaking a siege, for we are ourselves beleaguered by an army larger than our besieging force. The city is quite open to the sea on the north, with a great fleet sunk in the water, and the country to the east connects it with the army of relief."

* The Duke of Cambridge.

On December 26th:—

"The accounts from Sebastopol are full of the sufferings of our poor troops. All communication is almost impossible from the break up of the ground; but it must be the same with the enemy, and distress them still more. Since November 5th the Russians have given no signs of life; they have fallen back upon Tchernaya, and massed themselves on the north side of the harbour. As soon as our new batteries are in position the fire will begin again. In the meantime the Russians expect huge reinforcements, have made fresh interior fortifications, and have an immense number of guns."

The Ministry were unwilling to accept the Militia and foreign legion scheme, but the course of events rendered both measures necessary, when the terrible loss by which the battle of Inkermann was gained had further thinned the ranks of the brave men in the Crimea.

It was the Prince's work, under these circumstances, to stimulate the sending out reinforcements, and provisions for the comfort of the troops, as well as to keep up the spirits of the Ministry, who began to be very doubtful of success. He proposed the establishment of a depôt at Malta for a reserve to supply the army, and did his best for the supply of all those necessaries of life in which the army was so sadly deficient, sending fur coats to the officers and tobacco to the men of all the three regiments with which he was personally connected; and giving all his influence to Florence Nightingale's noble undertaking. Finding, too, that the want of system in making reports of the condition

of the army put great difficulties in the way of attending to their wants, he drew up a scheme of tabulated returns, to be regularly filled up, such as should compel attention to all the points which ought to be brought under the wholesome influence of method.

It was a very careful arrangement, and was adopted with good results, though probably it did not tend to render the Prince more popular, since there is nothing more irksome to the much occupied and unmethodical than filling up exact statistical information. It was the previous lack of this system that occasioned so much needless distress in the besieging army, and the impatience and displeasure against the veteran Lord Raglan. "The present administration of the army is not to be defended; my heart bleeds to think of it," were Prince Albert's words to King Leopold, and he worked at a memorandum on the means of keeping the organisation of the army in an efficient state in the time of peace, with such commissariat as could be depended upon. The matter was to be brought forward in the next Session of Parliament, but by that time the sufferings of the army, detailed in no measured terms by newspaper correspondents, had raised a storm of indignation throughout the country against those actually in office, although, in point of fact, they were not by any means as responsible as was the previous economy, and likewise the lack of experience of military needs

consequent upon a thirty years' peace. Those most blamed were the very men who were struggling the hardest against the almost insuperable difficulties caused by former neglect.

When the Session of 1855 began, Roebuck's motion for an inquiry into the condition of the army was carried by a majority of 157, and necessarily caused a resignation of the Coalition Ministry. Lord Derby was sent for, but could not secure the co-operation at the War Office of Lord Palmerston, for whom the whole country cried out, though he himself declared that he should not manage any better than the Duke of Newcastle.

Austria had, meantime, joined the alliance with England and France, but General Janvier and General Fevrier, as *Punch* called them, were well serving Russia. The French were discontented, the English furious—

"Things have gone mad here," wrote Prince Albert, "the political world is quite crazy, and the Court is the only institution which does not lose its tranquil bearing. Nevertheless the people will soon come to their senses again. The press, which, for its own ends, exaggerates the sufferings of the troops in the Crimea, has made the nation quite furious. It is bent upon punishing all and sundry, and cannot find the right person because he does not exist."

The Ministry were victims, as those who knew the facts understood, to the undiscerning indignation of the nation at the sufferings caused by tardiness of the military machinery of the country in getting into motion. The brunt of the blame was naturally directed

against those who were in authority for the moment, and Lord John Russell ought not to have tried to get absolved from his share by resigning in the teeth of the enquiry. "Everyone here took pains to prove that we had no army, and to contrive that the Queen should have no Government," was the way in which the Prince described the situation.

It was necessary to offer Lord John Russell the Premiership, and to call Lord Palmerston to the War Office, but as most of the experienced ministers declined to act with the former, Palmerston became the head of the Administration, and thenceforth more on his guard as to consultations with the Queen, so that his relations with her became quite friendly to the end.

Still, Vizthum's comment is:—

"Prince Albert, who knew the noble lord pretty well, and who said to me afterwards, 'I cannot respect that man, for he always prefers his own interests to those of the nation,' was too good a patriot not to see that Palmerston had become the man of the hour. Thus, then, the Prince and Lord Palmerston, standing on the two antipodes of politics, joined hands, and together saved the country and the parliamentary system from dangers which threatened general confusion, and had already compromised the reputation of all the leading statesmen."

The change caused a great loss to the Prince, who really loved Lord Aberdeen, and who, as he told the Bishop of Oxford, considered him one of the most virtuous of men; but private feeling had to be laid aside in the whirl of confusion.

Meanwhile the French Emperor was not ashamed to write, on February 16th, to the King of Sardinia:—

"What has rendered the siege interminable has been the want of energy in the English Commander-in-chief. After four months' delay they have not completed their siege operations against the more important portion; though we gave them all possible assistance by opening our magazines to them, affording transport to their sick and ammunition, and even giving them bread. Lord Stratford at Constantinople plays all sorts of tricks."

Perhaps the Emperor believed all this—but——!

The French before Sebastopol really were much worse provided, but accounts of their miseries were carefully suppressed, while those of the English were worked up; and the popular mind was in such a state that when Mr. Roebuck began his inquiry he told the Duke of Newcastle that the Committee believed they should discover that there had been a determination in high quarters that the expedition should not succeed, and actually expected to have to impeach Prince Albert.

When the Duke declared that the most valuable suggestions he had received had been from the much-maligned Prince, Roebuck stood amazed. He believed in the Queen's extreme anxiety for her soldiers, and had heard a story of one of the Royal children telling Lord Cardigan that if Sebastopol were not soon taken it would kill mamma; and yet he could suppose that her devoted husband was

ingeniously, and of set purpose, thwarting her wishes, disgracing her country, and wasting the lives of her subjects.

The Duke, greatly shocked, told the Prince what had passed, and consulted him whether anything could be done. He replied, that "we cannot make people either virtuous or wise, and must only regret the monstrous degree to which their aberration extended. I must rest mainly upon a good conscience, and the belief that during the fifteen years of my connection with this country I have not given a human soul the means of imputing to me the want of sincerity or patriotism."

Deeply wounded as he was by these foolish and outrageous calumnies, the Prince preserved his quiet and dignified attitude, and the new Secretary at War, Lord Panmure, soon found the value of his assistance, while the preparations already made by those who were so improperly abused were already improving the condition of the besiegers.

Napoleon, of course, laid all the blame upon English delay, for not having brought the war to a crisis; but a great change was about to take place. On February 16th, the Russian attack on Eupatoria was repulsed, and the Emperor Nicholas, who was already ailing, died soon after receiving the news, on March 2nd. This made a considerable difference in the general hope of peace, though the King of Prussia still would not throw

his weight into the scale against Russia. Victor Emmanuel heartily joined the Allies.

Napoleon took fresh heart, and began to think of a personal *coup* at the seat of war; but he resolved on previously taking his Empress to visit Queen Victoria. They arrived on April 16th, when Prince Albert met them at Dover.

There was a grand reception, of course, but not without anxiety lest there should be an attempt on the Emperor's life from some of his fanatical enemies. Moreover, as Count Vizthum says, "the adventurer of Strasburg and Boulogne thought of going in person to the Crimea, to put an end to the miserable business by a brilliant victory. The absurdity of the idea was patent. The army itself, who considered the Emperor no soldier, far less a commander, protested against it. A disaster, or even only a prolonged absence of the Emperor from Paris, might jeopardise his throne and the alliance with England. That country, moreover, would never have consented to put her soldiers under the supreme command of the French Emperor. Lord Palmerston seized the bull by the horns." He had already sent Lord Clarendon to dissuade the Emperor, and in all their conversations the Prince added his arguments. The Emperor said, after one of these conversations, to the Queen: "*Le Prince votre époux a l'esprit bien net*—always bringing people back to the point whence they

digressed." The visit was altogether much enjoyed. "The line between Emperor and *parvenu* was drawn," says Vizthum, "with singular skill;" and the charm of the Empress's beauty and grace was felt by all, especially her childish simplicity, which made her appear eighteen instead of twenty-eight.

There was a Grand Chapter of the Garter to admit the Emperor. The question arose whether he ought to take the oath of allegiance to the Order. "Not only to the Order," he said, "but to the Sovereign who bestowed it upon me, and that now and for ever!"

Yet, on his return to Paris, he had no scruple in representing himself as forced to continue the war by the English "*qui ont le diable au corps.*"

Just after the Imperial visit, on May 1st, Prince Albert gave his brother this account of the state of affairs:—

"Since the arrival of our light draught steam flotilla in the Sea of Azof, it has become possible to cut off the Russian communications on the road from Perekop, and to capture or destroy their great arsenals. Thus their mass of troops in the Crimea will be reduced by so much, while ours are increased. In General Pelissier, the French at last have a leader who is resolute and enterprising, and can raise the spirit of the French army which had been depressed by Canrobert's weakness. The English troops are again 30,000 men under arms, and their spirit is excellent.

"But it is as bad with diplomacy as it is well with the army. Austria will proclaim her shame before all Europe. The new French policy is as inactive as might be expected, and the position of the Emperor is not satisfactory. Here, there is such behaviour as if the wish were to make all government impracticable. Lord Derby and the Protectionists want to make common cause with Layard and his set for

the overthrow of the Palmerston ministry. From the mismanagement of Lord Ellenborough, which ought to have raised the storm in the *Upper* House, Disraeli has seized the opportunity again in the Lower House—there Gladstone and the Peelites take up the cry for peace, they declare against all continuance of the war, and lay on Aberdeen, and his late colleagues, all the blame of the former feeble and bad management, for which the public has long sought a victim.

"Disraeli, who has chiefly undertaken to damage Lord John and his peaceful policy in Vienna, and to increase the insecurity of the Palmerstonian cabinet, is in a condition to bait the Peelites supported by all the liberal and patriotic party. Palmerston gets great majorities, but is compelled to go beyond the extremest measures, and is free from all the control that could force him to moderation in his foreign policy. At the same time the Russian party in Europe will be enabled to profit by the *dictum* of the most distinguished English Statesmen, that England has undertaken a vain war of wild passion against Russia. But Lord Grey went beyond all, when, in reviling the complaisance of the whole House of Lords, he, perhaps in contradiction to the whole world, went so far in a motion as to approve the mission of Menzikoff and the invasion of the Principalities. The Vienna Conferences, which would have been better open, must now be closed, if it were only to give the Ministry peace in Parliament. O Oxenstiern, Oxenstiern."

Everyone was more or less working in the dark, and, indeed, only the light of later events have made it evident how the Emperor had purposely impeded the operations of the siege, in order that he might appear with grand effect, and make one of those *coups* in which he delighted; how Marshal Niel was sent to keep his Generals in check, leaving the English to bear the brunt; and how Lord Raglan's wonderful forbearance and courtesy were exerted to keep up a good understanding between the armies.

By that time the Duke of Coburg, after a visit to

Paris, was in London, where he was present at the Queen's personal distribution of medals to her wounded soldiers, which he calls such a noble and touching ceremony as he seldom saw equalled.

It was soon followed by the attacks on the Redan and the Malakoff; and that check, received (of all days in the year) on June 18th, and caused, as the historian of the Crimea has proved, by Lord Raglan's chivalrous sense of honour towards his allies, broke the health and spirit of the brave old soldier, so that he sank under cholera ten days later. In the pressure of the times it was necessary that General Simpson, an officer whose name was little known, should succeed to the difficult post.

Political capital was made out of the disaster, the Opposition clamouring for peace just as the army was being better provided. In a letter to Stockmar, the Prince says:—

"Since I last wrote to you we have added Lord Raglan to our losses, in spite of all that has been said and written against him an irreparable loss to us. There is something tragic in the manner of his death. That he should survive the disaster of the bloody assault on Waterloo day and then die of sickness! The 18th was the nail in his coffin, for he knew that his troops could do nothing under the circumstances which Pelissier had created, and that to give them the order to attack was to send them to certain death; and yet had he not done so, the French army would have believed he was deserting them in the hour of need, and ascribed their national losses to him alone. The choice must have been infinitely hard for him. And yet the French insinuate, and what is worse, the *Times* does so too, that Lord Raglan is alone to blame."

After a stormy Session of Parliament, when the vote of censure on the Aberdeen Ministry was proposed, but defeated by a large majority, the intended visit to Paris was paid, with great enjoyment and success. Paris, both historical and modern, was fully appreciated, and public affairs and military matters thoroughly discussed in a friendly tone, each Sovereign frankly telling the other the shortcomings of the armies. The Crimean news is summarised in a letter from the Prince to the King of the Belgians:—

"Little was said about politics beyond the strongest assurances of persevering loyalty in the war, until it shall be brought to a satisfactory close. The French are now within sixty yards of the Malakoff, and we, within a hundred and twenty of the Redan; the new Russian army was beaten in the field on the 16th, and must have lost 15,000 men on the occasion, for 3,200 dead were buried during the truce. The Russian cavalry must be at its last gasp for want of fodder, and the garrison of Sebastopol crippled by the numbers of sick and wounded. God send a happy issue to it all! And that would soon come had we *one* General-in-Chief."

Balmoral Castle, nearly completed, was a welcome change after the glare, bustle, and strain of the Parisian sojourn, and thither came the welcome telegram announcing the fall of Sebastopol, after perhaps the longest siege of recent history. To Stockmar the Prince sent the tidings:—

"I must write you a line as I cannot pay you a visit in your room, to show my joy with you over the fall of Sebastopol. Our bonfire on Craig Gowan, opposite the house, the setting up of which you will remember when the false news of the untamed Tartar arrived, one which to our sorrow we had to leave behind us when

we left Balmoral last year, which was moreover blown down by the gale on November 5th, Inkermann day, and found by us on our return, this year, in melancholy plight, blazed out magnificently about eleven o'clock on the evening of the 10th. It illuminated all the peaks round about; and the whole scattered population of the valleys understood the signal and made for the mountain, where we performed towards midnight a veritable witches' dance, supported by whiskey."

The letter, after giving the details of the occupation of the city, concludes with the intelligence: "Prince Fritz Wilhelm comes here to-morrow evening. I have received a very friendly letter from the Princess of Prussia."

The death of Nicholas and the prospect of peace had calmed the resentments towards Prussia, and Prince William, the heir to his childless brother, had always been inclined to a manlier policy, and was highly esteemed by Prince Albert. The idea of a marriage between their children was far from unwelcome. The Duke writes:—

"My brother loved his eldest daughter far too much and too tenderly to place political views decisively foremost in her future betrothal. For many years it had been his wish, as I had often observed, to behold in high position this, his favourite child, in whose education he had taken the largest personal share. With paternal delight he thought of his promising, highly-gifted, early-ripening daughter on a powerful throne, but I well knew that, above all things, he wished her to be happy.

"Among the princes of royal houses, even since the beginning of the fifties, the son of the Prince of Prussia, had, in reference to this subject, attracted the highest expectation. . . . The parents of Prince Frederick William had seen the Princess Victoria at home in the year 1853, during their stay in England, where at thirteen years old she had made the most winning impression on the minds of all the guests at the English Court. Before that time there could scarcely have

been a serious intention of a betrothal between the future Crown Prince and the daughter of my brother. In the year 1855, it was the question whether Prince Frederick William should take the journey with a view to the choice of his future bride. It was at the same time as I had gone to the Great Exhibition at Paris, that he came to England, and arrived on September 14th, at Balmoral, where the Court then was. When on my return from Paris I visited the Prussian princes at Coblentz, the arrangement of the betrothal, though confidently accepted, was a strict secret."

The Duke of Coburg thus describes the young couple:—

"They possessed in their youth nearly all the qualities which enable persons to awaken enthusiasm both ready and lasting. The manly appearance of the Prince, his frank manners, his unprejudiced perception of affairs quickly gained him true friends among older men. In spite of his great endowments, and his unusual knowledge and power (*wissen and konnen*), there might be fears lest he should not go beyond the narrow range of affairs and activity, thus not unfolding the full richness of his spirit and lifting it higher. It was as if the powerful nature of the young man, so highly endowed, physically and mentally, might find in the present position no employment worthy of it, or which could fully develop it.

"His far younger bride possessed an understanding enriched by such intellectual and political interests as Frederick William could bring before her. From the rich development of her natural qualities, she was advanced both in knowledge and power, as befitted one matured in a truly manly school. She fulfilled completely the scholastic and ethical ideal which my brother had from his earliest age devised. In reference to this, the Princess was, and is, completely Prince Albert's pupil as well as his darling, and she remains in many respects his likeness. In this respect, it was not of secondary importance that my brother himself instructed her, in part, in positive information, and in some points was her teacher in his own ways of thinking. Thus, the point in which her youthful character was in a peculiar manner different from that of her contemporaries, was in her early reception of the fundamental principles which my brother himself possessed, and in which he desired to rear his beloved daughter.

"My brother lost with the Princess a very favourite occupation as an

instructor, which had always been a refreshment to him. The boys of the family were not of equal substance, the other girls were still too small, and thus are explained the strong yearnings and grief which for a long time the Prince's letters showed with regard to the separation from the Princess. The time of the wedding was not fixed, and my brother absolutely insisted that it should not be till after the seventeenth birthday."

The Prince thus wrote:—

"Yesterday I received your letter of the 20th, according to which you will have arrived at Coblentz to-day on the way back from Paris. You perhaps know already what I write to you to-day, that our guest has spoken out his wish for a union with Vicky, with the King's permission. We willingly consent, but begged that the proposal should not be made to V. herself till after her confirmation in the new year, and the marriage is not to be thought of before her seventeenth birthday in November, 1857. You will know full well the importance of this event to us and will rejoice with us. The parents in Coblentz are much pleased, and the betrothal of the sister with your brother-in-law, draw the links closer with you and Alexandrina. If I close here, my lame hand and bad shoulder are to blame, only since yesterday have I used my pen and still somewhat badly. Fritz Wilhelm leaves us to-morrow. Now one general exhortation to keep the secret. All the world may talk of the event, but as long as we do not it does not signify."

The lame arm was the consequence of rheumatism and spasms, the reaction of the long tension of anxiety during the war. We all know the sweet, simple story, now recollected with a touch of gentle melancholy, of how the white heather on the Highland hill was the means of breaking all the staid injunctions of waiting for the future, and how the parents, scarcely yet past the first flush of youth themselves, were full of exultant joy. To Stockmar Prince Albert wrote:—

"Prince Fritz Wilhelm left us yesterday. Vicky has indeed behaved quite admirably, as well during the closer explanation on Saturday as in the self-command which she displayed subsequently at the parting. She manifested towards Fritz and ourselves the most childlike simplicity and candour, and the best feeling. The young people are ardently in love with one another, and the purity, innocence, and unselfishness of the young man have been on his part equally touching. . . . While deep visible revolutions in the emotional nature of the two young people and of the mother were taking place, by which they were powerfully agitated, my feeling was rather one of cheerful satisfaction and gratitude to God, for bringing across our path so much that is noble and good, where it may, nay must, conduce to the happiness for life of those whom He has endowed with these qualities and who are, in themselves, so dear to me."

It is strange to find with how much displeasure the proposed union was regarded, when the secret oozed out, in consequence of the dislike of Prince Albert's supposed German proclivities, and no doubt, also, of the neutral attitude of Prussia during the war. The *Times* called the Hohenzollern a paltry German dynasty, and assumed that the Prince, though heir to the crown after his father, was to enter the Russian service. It was not then realised that the heir-apparent and his son were of very different mould from the vacillating Frederick William, and the murmurs did not at once die away.

The war was not yet over, and difficulties as to the command in the Crimea were pressing. General Simpson, feeling himself unequal to the terrible responsibilities, resigned; and, though the general opinion was in favour of Sir William Codrington as his successor, there were

difficulties as to seniority. The Prince, to prevent hurting the feelings of the generals of higher rank, proposed to divide the army into two corps, with equality of command, but subject to the general control of the Commander-in-Chief.

This plan was accepted, and Lord Palmerston wrote that he and all the members of the Cabinet "felt greatly obliged for the suggestion of an arrangement which had not occurred to any of them, but which, when proposed and explained, at once obtained the assent of all whose duty it was to take it into consideration."

While engaged in the details on this matter, and on new rules for examination and admission to the diplomatic service, the Prince made time to prepare his young daughter for her probable position, by an hour's conversation with her every evening, chiefly on historical subjects. He also wrote to her future husband, to whom he laid down grand principles in his comments on the means employed in Prussia to secure that at the elections members devoted to Government might be returned:—

"The state of Prussia, as you described it, is most critical, and designs such as those contemplated by the reactionists, prosecuted by such means as are at this moment practised in regard to the elections, may result in extreme danger to the monarchy. For if the world be overruled by a God, as I believe it is, vile and wicked actions must bear evil fruits, which frequently do not show themselves at once, but long years afterwards, as the Bible tells us in the words: 'The sins of the fathers are visited on the children to the third and fourth generation." This

being so, I ask myself, what are the duties of those who are to come after in reference to the sowing of such dragons' teeth? And I am constrained to answer to myself that they are enjoined by morality, conscience, and patriotism, not to stand as indifferent spectators of the destruction of a constitution that has been sworn to. And when I consider what I should do in the present state of things, this much is quite clear to me, that I would record a solemn protest against such proceedings, not by way of opposition to the Government, but in defence of those whose rights I should regard as inseparable from my own, those of my country and my people, and in order that I might absolve my conscience from any suspicion of participation in the unholy work. At the same time, that my conduct might be divested of any semblance of being dictated by a spirit of opposition or desire for popularity, and in order it may be to make the step itself unnecessary, I should in all confidence make those who are contemplating the wrong aware, that, if it were persisted in, I should feel myself compelled to adopt this course. This done, I should entertain no animosity towards my friends, but, on the contrary, should live in peace with the reigning powers. I am satisfied that an attitude of this kind would inspire the delinquents with a certain measure of alarm, and help to keep the nation from losing all hope, and there is no such solid basis for patience as hope.

"In your letter to Victoria, of the 3rd, which she received yesterday, you speak of your new labours and studies in the different ministerial departments. When you have worked in them for some time, the truth will become obvious to you of Axel Oxenstierna's saying, 'My son, you will be surprised to learn with how little wisdom the world is governed.' I am only afraid that it will be nobody's interest to explain essential principles to you, and that, on the contrary they will try, perhaps not unintentionally, to overwhelm you with the multiplicity of details and of so-called work. But this good must, at any rate, ensue, that you will become thoroughly acquainted with what is making history. Most German bureaucrats cannot, and even will not, see the wood for the trees; they even regard the abstract idea of the wood as something dangerous, and measure its value by the density with which the trees are huddled together, not by the vigour of their growth: added to which, the weight and number of German official documents is something appalling."

There can be little doubt that the example and counsels

of Prince Albert, both directly and through his daughter, had a great effect on the very noble character of the Emperor whom Europe is still mourning.

The actual humbling of France, and the establishment of German unity, came to pass, the latter in fulfilment of the visions of the Prince's lifetime; and though to his son-in-law only a secondary share was possible, yet the subsequent disclosures show how great that share was in reality, and how much influence was exerted.

The deep religious principle, the noble unselfishness, the power to act, with the wisdom and dutifulness of not acting unseasonably, and, above all, the strength to "suffer and be strong," were all destined to be developed in a most remarkable manner in the younger man. There was, too, the same earnest benevolence. Truly we feel it one of those noble traits that are the very salt of life, that after the triumphal procession in our capital, when the Crown Prince, while already bearing the sentence of death within himself, was the very grandest and most stately figure in the scene, the notes he made in his pocket-book were for the homeliest, humblest beneficence: "Cabman's rest; drinking-troughs for dogs."

In February, Vizthum records another conversation on the prospects of peace. The Prince attributed Russia's symptoms of yielding to the action that Austria was at length taking:—

"In making peace," he said, "it is just like horse-dealing. People are not yet agreed as to what is the best mode of setting about it when a man wants to sell a horse. Ought he to name a price and then proceed to bargain, or to fix his last price at once? When it came to proposing the terms of peace, we started here with the view that the most advantageous and dignified course was to name a fixed price. If peace is accepted on the terms which we consider necessary in the interest of Europe, we will conclude peace with pleasure, otherwise we will not. Our policy is simple, clear, and fairly intelligible, to anyone who surveys the situation calmly and reasonably. What we desire is either the prompt conclusion of a sound peace, or to carry on the war under the most favourable circumstances to ourselves. We are now in an infinitely better position than before to prosecute the war with energy, and, without wishing to ruin Russia, to deal that Colossus the most damaging blows English indolence has taken several years to get ready. Our preparations are now complete, and we can show that England is not made up of spinners and shop-keepers as we are told. . . . . In a few weeks we are bound to know all for certain. If, as I heartily desire, peace is established, it will be an experience unique in history, and serve to promote the progress of mankind, that two great nations should have succeeded, by dint of tremendous sacrifice, in carrying on and bringing to an end a war with clean hands, without deriving from it any individual benefit to themselves, and with the self-denying object of vindicating right and justice, and punishing past and preventing future wrong."

Proposals of peace were being debated, and Victor Emmanuel, *il Re Galantuomo*, was received at Windsor for a brief visit. It was not, however, without many more difficulties on all sides that the Peace of Paris was finally concluded, in April of 1856.

It was no small triumph, after all the failures and the murmurs, to find the French sending out to study our system, as theirs had entirely broken down. At the end of the war, out of 63,000 men, the English had only

5,000 sick, and the average of deaths three daily; while the French had 250 deaths a day, from 63,000 sick, out of an army of 150,000.

The Prince writes:—

"Vicky's confirmation, and the conclusion of the Peace of Paris, work together to open our lips, and to-day we announce to our relations what they may have taken the liberty of thinking, that Vicky and Prince Fritz William of Prussia are an engaged pair."

CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS ROYAL.

1857-1858.

Deaths in the Royal Household—The Prince on the Working-men's Clubs — Evidence of his general knowledge — Title of Prince Consort—Outbreak of the Mutiny—The Emperor of the French and the English alliance—The Orsini attempt—Preparation for the royal wedding—Relief of Lucknow—The wedding—Correspondence with the Princess—The Conspiracy to Murder Bill —Fall of Lord Palmerston's Ministry.

THE year that followed the Peace of Paris was chiefly remarkable for domestic events. A great shock was the paralytic seizure of Lord Hardinge, while he was actually in the presence of the Queen and Prince, which was speedily followed by his death. The Balmoral holiday was hardly ended before the Royal Family were saddened by the death of the Queen's half-brother, Prince Charles of Leiningen. As the Prince wrote: "The autumn wind has wrenched away another leaf from our family tree, and the love-united band of our good grandmamma's grandchildren is

now poorer by one of its oldest and most vigorous members. In this there lie for us Past, Present, and Future."

In the winter of 1856, Mr. Clabon, an anxious worker for the benefit of the working classes, who had advocated the establishment of coffee-rooms and clubs for their wholesome recreation, obtained an interview with Prince Albert at Windsor Castle. From his account some extracts are given:—

"The Prince said that he had read my pamphlet; that it was important to consider the rules of political economy; that any departure from them would tend to failure; that these rules required the commercial principle to be introduced; that the institution must be self-supporting, and that in fact people of good character must be persuaded to open such a house as I had described with a licence from the magistrates, and to conduct it so as to make it remunerative. I thanked him for the suggestion, and said that I appreciated its value.

"The Prince then said that it should be a reformed public-house. He quite agreed that there should be smoking, but did not agree that it need be in a separate room. He said that it was important that the wife and family should come there as well as the labourer himself. The women of England were excellent wives and mothers. Now, they had to do their best to keep their husbands from public-houses; with such an institution they might encourage them to go there and go with them. As to the mingling of class with class, he said he doubted whether it could be carried out. The lower classes would always feel a restraint in the presence of the higher classes.

* * * * *

"Returning to the commercial question, the Prince said that as the building of lodging-houses for labourers had led to the reform of other lodging-houses, so the establishment of 'leisure houses,' might lead to the reform of the public-houses. . . . The Prince said that the first 'leisure house' must not be in too public a place; that the experiment had better be made quietly, and the public made acquainted with the results according to the success realised. The site must be in the

middle of the cottages, the poor man would not go far to it. . . . I asked whether his Royal Highness had observed that I proposed to have an occasional dance. He had. I said that our labouring population were far behind those of other countries in polish, and I thought an attempt might be made to introduce dancing. He agreed, but he doubted whether they would enjoy it or enter into it with spirit unless they had something to drink. I said, let them have tea, coffee, and lemonade. He said, that in Scotland they were fond of dancing, but wanted to have whiskey; that at Osborne there was an entertainment to all persons employed there and the household once a year, generally on his—the Prince's—birthday, that last year one or two had too much, and that this year the beer given was not therefore so strong, and there was dissatisfaction; they did not seem to enter into the dancing with spirit. But he agreed that spirituous liquor should be excluded. . . .

"The Prince's English is not perfect; he speaks with a decidedly foreign accent, and once or twice he hesitated for a word; Lord Torrington said this was unusual, that he was generally very fluent, and that he was a little nervous at seeing a stranger, as he generally is."

These extracts have been given at some length, partly because in them is the germ of the institutions that have since arisen in numerous places, and because they show in a remarkable manner how Prince Albert was always suggestive, and never ignorant, of either a great matter or a small. Apropos, Sir Theodore Martin quotes Sir Charles Phipps as saying that no one ever had an interview with the Prince without becoming persuaded that his own business was the Prince's own speciality. A great glass manufacturer, who came to see him about some chandeliers, went away saying, "That man is wonderful! he knows more about glass than I do;" and then added, "That is a man one cannot *like*—one must

love him." A notable French author, after an interview with him, wrote to Lady Theresa Lewis:—

"I have rarely met such a distinguished man, and never approached a Prince who seemed to me so remarkable on all sides; and I can say without flattery, on leaving England, that of all the memorable things I have witnessed there, nothing has struck me so much as the conversation I have just had. You are happy to have such a man so near the throne."

This was the feeling of all who came into personal contact with him, from the Premier to the labourers on his farms, with whom he would converse most kindly, watching over their welfare with parental care, and even inspecting the copy-books of such as were willing to learn. His unpopularity was among those who had no intercourse with him, disliked his German birth, and had a general idea that he had a love of interference and of novelty.

His actual desire was to understand everything sufficiently to be able to appreciate, criticise, arrange, and promote real excellence; and this he carried out to the best of his ability. He was in his element when opening the Art Treasures Exhibition at Manchester, in 1858, but it was such a hard day's work that he declared his answer to the corporation to have been made "with a frightful voice, quite cracked." His speeches on the occasion were declared by the *Spectator* "to deposit the seed for future thought," especially when on unveiling the statue of the Queen at Salford, he spoke of the

Sovereign as the representative of the institutions of the country. Then, in the same summer, came the opening of the South Kensington Museum—an especial child of his—and where he would fain have seen the National Gallery established, so as to be freer from smoke and dust.

On June 25th, 1857, by Royal Letters Patent, the title of Prince Consort was conferred on him. The reasons he thus explains in a letter to his stepmother :—

"I have not said a word about my change of title, and I now present myself before you as an entire stranger, Prince Consort to wit. The change had become necessary as our sons grew up, all sorts of confusion having already arisen, especially as the names of all the three begin, like my own, with an A; and I was certain to appear to them in the long run like a stranger in the land, as they alone were English princes, and I merely a Coburg prince: now I have a legal status in the English hierarchy. It was also a source of weakness for the Crown that the Queen always appeared before the people with her foreign husband."

There was a brilliant visit of the Queen, with her husband, the elder children, and the Prussian Prince, to the Manchester Exhibition; but, meanwhile, anxieties were working up respecting India, and the frightful tidings of the massacre at Meerut led to an immediate despatch of troops to the East. This was again an opportunity of enforcing upon Government the necessity of maintaining a reserve force—

"Very soon," writes the Prince, "we shall be entirely without troops, India absorbs so many. It is very well that it has come to this outbreak in India, as it shows the sore places which the Company are constantly trying to smear over and conceal. The *Times* and

the Press generally were constantly lavishing nothing but laudation on the Indian and abuse on the Imperial army. . . . Now the bubble has burst. Our Ministry is, however, by no means up to the mark, as little as it was in the last war, and, after that experience, still more to blame."

The Prince was likewise uneasy at the symptoms manifested by Napoleon III. towards interference in Italian affairs, and at his inclination towards an alliance with Russia:—

"In politics," he wrote to his brother, "all is confusion. Russia has manifestly suffered more than she can endure, and needs only a couple of years to begin the same game again. In the meantime the Western alliance is breaking up from the rascality of a French ministry, and the good-natured indifference of the ruler towards things which if well managed will serve as good material. We may easily find ourselves with our backs driven against the wall, because we are directed by fixed principles."

A little later, Prince Chimay said in a letter to the Duke of Coburg:—

"The English alliance was accepted by necessity, and is still on the lips but no longer in the heart. Not that the Emperor, who is very English, is not personally attached to the Queen, but I am speaking of the Cabinet, and the Emperor represents the national sentiment. It seems impossible that if Lord Palmerston remains in power, and continues everywhere to raise the demagogic sentiment, this coldness should not soon degenerate into a complete rupture. . . . It must not be forgotten that, with demagogues, the order of the day towards all thrones is assassination."

Meantime, French feeling was gratified by the numerous sovereigns who visited the Court; and in the end of the summer, just after the Prince Consort's return from witnessing at Antwerp the wedding of that devoted

but ill-starred couple, Maximilian of Austria and Charlotte of Belgium, the Emperor of the French made a visit at Osborne, partly for the sake of discussion on the vexed question of the Danubian Provinces. The matter was settled between the Ministers on either hand, Palmerston and Clarendon, Walewski and Persigny; but there was free discussion between the Emperor and the Prince, and, as Lord Palmerston afterwards said to the Queen:—"The Prince can say many things to the Emperor which we cannot;" and the effect upon Napoleon III., if we may trust his letter on his return, was "I believe that after passing a few days with your Majesty one comes away the better for it, even as, after appreciating the various knowledge and lofty judgment of the Prince, one comes away from him better informed and more fitted to do good."

Perhaps the Prince himself was somewhat less sanguine, for it was ironically that he wrote to his brother: "All grievances and ill-temper went out of the way, and are gone up the Alps! It is to be hoped the glaciers will not melt there before all affectionate assurances of the reconciled Emperors!"

An expedition to Cherbourg, and view of the forts there, strengthened the urgent wish of the Queen and Prince that more should be done for English defences; and the continued bad tidings from India made them strenuously endeavour to induce the Ministry to raise

and send out larger reinforcements. "We are tortured by the events in India," says the Prince to Stockmar, "which are truly frightful. 'The distance, and the double government of Crown and Company, make all remedial measures extremely difficult and slow."

This anxiety occupied his mind through that autumn at Balmoral, while sympathising with his daughter as she took her leave of all the haunts of her childhood. And in the winter, when the marriage was to take place, an event happened which increased all the dangers and perplexities, and in which his brother was involved, and had a narrow escape. This was the well-known Orsini attempt on the Emperor Napoleon, at which the Duke of Coburg was present, while staying at Paris on his way to his niece's wedding in England. General Rognet, who had been in the Imperial carriage, and was struck in the neck, declared that the Duke of Coburg owed his life to his having driven separately, since his great height would have been fatal to him had he been with the Emperor, as all the splinters had flown over the heads of the destined victims. So nearly had the wedding festivities been turned into tears and mourning.

"The last year," wrote the Prince to the Dowager-Duchess of Coburg, not long after the death of his cousin, the Duchess of Nemours,

"has again brought so much trouble with it that one is quite glad to leave it behind. The new year begins for us with the separation from

a beloved daughter which will be especially painful to me. I do not, however, let any hint of this be seen, and I rejoice for her in the prospect of a happy future. I hope she may soon be able to present herself in person, and that you may judge her with indulgence. This will be especially necessary for her in Germany, where everything is so new to her, and in Berlin, where much will be so difficult. Heaven will be her stay.

"We have innumerable visitors, and to find room for them all in a very limited palace will be a real feat of dexterity. If I succeed in doing this, I may take a professional tour as a conjuror, for the countless bouquets from Herr Dobler's hat are not more remarkable than the Princes without number in Buckingham Palace."

Just before the wedding took place the minds of the royal parents were greatly relieved respecting India, by tidings of the relief of Lucknow, after a defence which Lord Canning compared with those of Numantia and Zaragoza, though happily it ended differently.

On January 25th, the close packing of princes and princesses having been accomplished, the Prince Consort gave his daughter to her bridegroom, only eighteen years after his own marriage. The Duchess Dowager of Coburg was one of the few relatives absent, and to her the Prince wrote on the 30th:—

"I have been unable until now to find one quiet moment to write to you, and even now I must steal the time to do so from right and left. We had thirty-five Royal personages to house, to fête, to show England to, to exhibit the bride to the people, to society, &c., to receive the bridegroom, to marry the young people, to prepare their brief honeymoon at Windsor, to induct our son-in-law into the Order of the Garter, to get back here, &c. To-day is devoted to receiving addresses, and to a monster Drawing-room.

"I am now a real father-in-law, our child a real wife. That this looks somewhat strange you will comprehend, not less will you feel

that the separation for ever of our dear daughter from the family circle makes a frightful gap in our hearts. I do not trust myself to think of Tuesday, on which day we are to lose her."

"I think it will kill me to take leave of dear Papa," were the words of the bride to her mother.

The Prince and the two eldest brothers went to see the pair embark for Germany, at Gravesend, and came home much impressed with the eager enthusiasm manifested by the crowds on their way. The Princess became one of his most constant correspondents from the moment of the parting. One of his earliest letters to her, on hearing of her reception, strongly expresses affection to her.

"Thank God, everything goes on to our wish, and you seem to gain golden opinions in your favour; which naturally gives us extreme pleasure, both because we love you, and because this touches our parental pride. But what has given us most pleasure of all was the letter, so over-flowing with affection, which you wrote while yet on board the yacht. Poor child, well did I feel the bitterness of your sorrow, and would so fain have soothed it. But excepting my own sorrow, I had nothing to give, and that would only have had the effect of augmenting yours."

Again he writes to the daughter whom he had described as having the head of a man and the heart of a child:—

"Let me express my fullest admiration of the way in which, possessed exclusively by the duty which you had to fulfil, you have kept down and overcome your own little personal troubles, perhaps also many feelings of sorrow not yet healed. This is the way to success, and the *only* way. If you have succeeded in winning people's

hearts by friendliness, simplicity and courtesy, the secret lay in this, that you were not thinking of yourself. Hold fast that mystic power. It is a spark from Heaven."

A little later:—

"Your festival time, if not your honeymoon, comes to an end to-day, and on this I take leave to congratulate you, unfeeling though it may sound, for I wish for you the necessary time and tranquillity to digest the many impressions you have received, and which otherwise, like a wild revel, first inflame and then stupify, leaving a dull nerveless lassitude behind. . . . The public, first, because it was rapturous and enthusiastic will become minutely critical, and take you to pieces anatomically. This is to be borne in mind, although it need cause you no uneasiness, for you have only followed your natural bent, and have made no external demonstration which did not answer to the truth of your inner nature. It is only the man who presents an artificial demeanour to the world who has to dread being unmasked."

In the meantime, the attempt upon the Emperor's life had produced further ill consequences. Two men, both Italians, had been arrested, Pierri in the street, Orsini at his lodging; and as England had been the refuge of political fugitives, the French considered themselves to have reason to complain that it was the harbour of assassins, where plots were matured and instruments prepared. The army was enthusiastically Bonapartist, and regiments, by their addresses, vied with one another in denunciation. One "demanded an account from the land of impurity which contains the haunts of the monsters who are sheltered by its laws."

Lord Palmerston, thinking there was some reason in the Emperor's remonstrance, which was of course less

offensively expressed, introduced a Bill into Parliament for the punishment of conspiracy; but the National mind had become inflamed by the furious invectives of the French, which seemed to question the National right of sheltering patriots in distress; and the Bill was rejected on the second reading, and in such a manner as to leave the Ministry no option but resignation.

"For this," writes Prince Albert, "we have to thank the heedlessness of Louis Napoleon, who ought to have known better than to suffer England to be insulted by his lieutenants. The excitement in the country is tremendous, and at this moment, Lord Palmerston is the most unpopular of men. It is quite ludicrous to hear how his old worshippers talk of him."

And certainly it was a curious reverse, that he should fall for an anti-revolutionary measure.

Prince Albert wrote soon after taking leave of his brother:—

"The folly of Walewski and the short-sightedness of the Emperor have overthrown our Ministry, disgusted all his old friends, and agitated the nation here to the highest degree. People in Paris must be surprised at the effects of their own grenade. . . . We are going to rest for a fortnight in Osborne, which we greatly need. The new Ministry, with a minority of 123 in the lower House, and 10 in the Upper, has the Conspiracy Bill, the India Bill, and the promised Reform Bill, on its hands. We mean to persist in all three, for it is not well to give way."

CHAPTER X.

THE DERBY MINISTRY.

1858-1859.

The Derby Ministry—Irritation against the French—The India Bill—Visit of Prince George of Saxony—Visits to Coburg and Babelsberg—Visit to Cherbourg—A speech under critical conditions—Visit to the Princess Royal—Imminence of the Italian war—Birth of a grandson—Advice to Prussia—Letters to his daughter—Resignation of the Derby Ministry—The war of Italian liberation.

THE Earl of Derby was called to the head of affairs with a cabinet in which all save the former Protectionists declined to serve, much to the regret of the Prince. "We have a repetition of the old patriotic (?) spirit," he writes, "and no prospect of getting a stable ministry!"

The new administration had to deal with the Orsini difficulty, and the extreme irritation on both sides of the Channel that threatened an outbreak of war. One Simon Bernard, a refugee, was tried at the Central Criminal Court as an accessory before the fact of the attempt on the Emperor's life, while Orsini and Pierri were executed in

Paris. That he was a conspirator connected with them was proved, but there was no evidence of his knowledge of this individual plot; and he was acquitted. The populace manifested imprudent delight, which further exasperated the French nation; and the Prince writes to his brother:—

"We hear nothing good from Paris. The whole machine has become insecure and unsteady. The Chief is attracted by Italy, where he may cause a conflagation that we must try to hinder if all Europe is not to be set on fire. People play with the most sacred and perilous things, and lament Orsini. The feeling against England at Paris is at its height, and the overt utterances of Bernard, and the fiery speeches of Mr. James, the counsel for the defence, against Emperor and Empress, with the vehement rejoicing of the public at the declaration of the verdict must have angered them much. The Government cannot venture to go further with the proceedings, because a repetition of the result is certain, and would only do further mischief.

"The public here is determined to set at nought the bailiffs, catchpoles and hangmen of a foreign tyrant, and imputes to him the taking such a part upon himself, and enforcing it with threats. This is the cause of the overthrow of Palmerston, the failure of the Refugee Bill and the trial, and there is something noble at the bottom of it. A nation does not reason; it only feels.

"We like the Duke of Malakoff, our new Ambassador. He is simple, frank, and friendly, quite unused to *les usages du monde*, and unhappy in society; yet keen enough to find out its disposition. He is very talkative and strong in his expressions; he leads the conversation as a general in command would lead it with other officers, especially a Frenchman, with a good deal of *légèreté* intermixed. On the measures of his master he speaks openly and not very favourably. In person he is unusually short and stout, but not so stout as had been said, slow in movement, but quick with his sparkling black eyes, and very susceptible to the approbation of ladies."

Matters were quieting down, and the mutiny in India

was being stamped out, and on March 22nd Lucknow was finally mastered, while every mail brought tidings of fresh victories and of terrible retribution. Already it had been decided that the government of the vast domains in Hindostan should be transferred from the East India Company to the sovereign, but the details had not yet been carried out.

Lord Palmerston had prepared a Bill vesting the actual government in a council to be nominated by the Crown, whose members were to have had ten years' experience in Indian affairs; but the Conservative Ministry proposed that the Council should be elected by holders of East Indian Stock, persons who had served in India, and the parliamentary constituents of the five chief towns concerned in the commerce with India. The Queen and Prince, on seeing the draft of the Bill, strongly deprecated this latter element, as unjust to other towns, and, moreover, admitting the votes of many people entirely uninformed and uninterested in the subject.

Lord Ellenborough was, notwithstanding, persuaded that the provision was necessary, but it was strongly opposed in Parliament by Mr. Bright, and the Ministry was in danger. However, this was averted by a series of resolutions being laid before the House and carried one by one. Finally, Lord Ellenborough, whose love of independent action had made the Prince pronounce him from the first an element of weakness in the

Cabinet, resigned, and there were no serious difficulties afterwards.

On the whole, a peaceful and prosperous period had set in, with a good deal of royal visiting. In the spring, Prince George of Saxony was to go on a courting expedition to Portugal. Count Vizthum was to ascertain whether he should pay a visit to the Queen on his way. He went to Prince Albert, who said:—

"Tell me honestly, what brings Prince George here? Does he wish to see us in London?"

"His wish is to wait upon the Queen and your Royal Highness, and to know when it would be agreeable to the Queen to receive him. If at the same time an opportunity occurs of showing him something of London, I will do so with pleasure."

The Prince rang and asked for an almanac.

"Then he will be in Paris at the end of March. On the 2nd of April is the Confirmation of the Prince of Wales. It is no use to invite a Roman Catholic prince to that. On the 9th, you say, the Brazil steamer goes to Lisbon. That suits admirably. Please telegraph that we shall be glad to welcome the Prince at Windsor from the 5th to the 9th of April. He can come to London, if he likes, a few days earlier, when you will be able to show him what you please."

All was therefore practically settled in three minutes. The way and manner of doing it was characteristic of

the Queen's husband. He was completely master of the house, however much he concealed it from the public.

Prince George accordingly came, and great pains were taken to make him acquainted with the most interesting persons of the day, and the Prince Consort himself showed off the numerous treasures of Windsor Castle, including his own beautiful collections of engravings, etchings, and miniatures.

In May, the Prince Consort made an excursion to Coburg, where he hoped to meet his daughter; but he was disappointed, as she was laid up by a bad strain of her foot. It was, however, a pleasant renewal of old associations, as told in a Sunday's letter to the Queen:—

"We went to the Palace, where a mediocre sermon, and a fine full chanting of chorales, combined with the impressions of bygone days constituted my devotions. A number of children were confirmed on the same spot where Ernest and I pronounced our confession of faith. After church Stockmar came to dine, and remained with me an hour and a-half. After this I went with Ernest and Alexandrine to the new burial-ground, and the mausoleum, which is indeed very beautiful and appropriate, then to the museum, where I once more hailed with delight all the birds, butterflies and shells, and called to mind every circumstance connected with their acquisition; thence to a magnificent new brewery, opposite the meadow in the direction of the new railway station which has been placed between the brewery and Ernest Wurtemburg's garden, and so up to Ernest Wurtemburg's. We did not find him at home, but we saw the beautiful familiar view. . . ."

A day or two later, here is this pleasant message in a letter to one of the elder children:—"Thank mamma and the children for their letters, and give them some

of the pansies that go to you in a tin case. They are from the terrace at Rosenau, under your windows. The cowslips I gathered at the Salswuzerei. Make tea of them in honour of me, and give Bertie some."

He then went on to Babelsberg, where the Prussian royal family then was: poor King Frederick William in so failing a state, both in mind and body, that it was becoming needful to appoint a regency—

"Here," writes the Prince "I found the young couple in the deepest affection and unity, the father cheerful, though somewhat over-confident of the permanency of his isolated position and powers. The King came in with the Queen, and was half an hour there, in which he did not once speak as if astray, but his appearance is melancholy, the ruin of what he once was. Yet still he moves as a King, feels himself such, and hopes for improvement."

No improvement, however, was granted, and the poor King was rapidly falling into imbecility. Meantime, the French Emperor urgently invited English royalty to be present at the great inauguration of his new docks at Cherbourg.

The invitation was not welcome. Prince Albert could not like or esteem the Emperor, and was not disposed to minister to French vainglory and combativeness; but the expediency of preserving peace put personal considerations aside, and the Ministry strongly advised that the visit should be made. The Prince Consort wrote, on July 10th, from Osborne:—

"We have been three days here, pursued by the heaviest and most

disagreeable business as much as in London. A Tory ministry with a Radical programme, a Republican measure with a Conservative majority, against the regular Liberal opposition, is an infinite difficulty for the Constitutional monarch. We have been pressed by the Emperor and these Ministers to go to Cherbourg. That the festival is a glorification of the sea and land armaments against England is certain at the core, and we feel no pleasure in being harnessed again to the French triumphal chariot, nor to kiss the rod, so we shall make it a private visit and go away before the festival."

This intention was overruled, and, with the Prince of Wales, the Queen and Prince Albert arrived at Cherbourg on the day before the opening of the railway, and the great basin called the Napoleon Docks. There was a superb reception, but the civilities covered such thin ice that the most careful tact was needed not to break through it. At a dinner on board the *Bretagne*, the French flag-ship, the Queen's diary says:—"We were both made very nervous by my poor Albert having to make a speech in answer to one which the Emperor was going to make, and having to compose it." Then came the time:—"After the band had played came the dreadful moment for my dear husband, which was terrible to me, and which I should never wish to go through again. He did it very well, though he hesitated once. I sat shaking, with my eyes *cloués sur la table*. However, the speech did very well. This over, we got up, and the Emperor in the cabin shook Albert by the hand, and we all talked of the terrible emotion we had undergone, the Emperor himself having changed colour, and

the Empress having been very nervous. I shook so that I could not drink my cup of coffee."

Peace or war might turn on the cordiality of this meeting, and the friendly conclusion was a great relief; but the sight of the "cannons, cannons, cannons wherever you turned," had made the visitors very anxious, and the Prince strove to rouse the Government to equal preparations. "The war preparations in the French marine are immense! Ours despicable! Our Ministers use fine phrases, but they do nothing. My blood boils within me." Then, after returning home for a short time, the Queen and Prince proceeded to make their first visit to their daughter. The journey was saddened by hearing of the sudden death of Mr. Cart, for twenty-nine years valet to the Prince. Kind love and friendship towards servants had always been a characteristic of the royal couple, and Cart was lamented as "the only link with the Prince's childhood with whom he could talk over old times." "We had to choke down our tears all day," the Queen says, throughout the festal journey, which brought them at dark to the Wildpark Station, where "stood our darling child with a nosegay in her hand." Yet even on that evening tears flowed for Cart. And in the midst of the sight-seeing and festivities that ensued, there was grave consideration and important recasting of the Proclamation to the people of India, on the close of the war, and the change of Government.

The consequent arrangements, and the matters respecting the command of the army in India, were continually under consideration, and the Prince strongly and decidedly pressed the necessity of unity of command, and abandoning the old rule, which had resulted in mutiny.

The feebleness of the King of Prussia made it needful that his brother William, the presumptive heir, should become Regent, and therewith came a change of politics very satisfactory to the Prince; but France was in a restless state, which kept Europe in anxiety lest the Emperor should gratify the Bonapartist passion for war, and the general liberalism of his people, by an attack on the Austrian power still subsisting in Italy. In January, 1859, the Prince writes to Stockmar:—

"The state of Europe has become very perplexed since I last wrote to you. Louis Napoleon thinks he has found the right moment for making war, and the right field for it in Italy, and the people about him, especially his cousin, have been constantly dinning into his ears: "*C'est une occasion qui ne se trouvera pas une seconde fois aussi belle.* The speech on New Year's day seems to have set light to the train before all was ready, and now all Europe is alarmed, and would fain establish a fire brigade."

A few days later, he says to Lord Malmesbury of the Emperor:—

"He has been born and bred a conspirator, and at his present age will never get out of this turn of mind, scheming himself and suspicious of others. For his schemes he wanted, and still wants, an ally. England was the only one he could obtain after his assumption of the Imperial Crown; but as the English Alliance means maintenance of public law and treaties, and progress in civilisation, it was

frequently most irksome to him, and hence his constant complaints of the restraints to which it subjected him. Now he has got Russia, and is longing for revenge against Europe. He thinks himself safe in this Alliance, and therefore comes forward with his schemes. Nothing will arrest him but uncertainty about England and fear of Germany."

Again :—

"The Emperor *attend un evenement*, to use his own phrase. The responsibility which he takes upon himself before God is frightful!"

An event, however, that was truly delightful to the Prince's warm heart was the birth of his eldest grandson, drawing the bands that connected the Royal Family with that of Prussia all the closer. Letters passed on the occasion between the Queen and Emperor: in the hope on her side of his availing himself of the remonstrance of England to get out of his false position, and on his of drawing England into a war with Austria on the popular plea of Italian independence. And there was much wavering on the Emperor's part as he watched opinions in France and speeches in England, keeping secret all the time that he had pledged himself to assist Victor Emmanuel in driving the Austrians out of Italy. The Prince Regent of Prussia wrote to Prince Albert, and sent Count Perponcher to ascertain his opinion on the part Prussia ought to take in case of a war between Austria and France on the Italian question. Here are some characteristic extracts from the reply :—

"When Frederick the Great asked old Ziethen what was to be done under certain circumstances, Ziethen scratched his head and after thinking for a while, answered his master: 'Set me face to face with

the enemy, and I will tell you.' Well, although I cannot pretend to compare myself to the old hero, I feel just as he did the difficulty of coming to a decision about mere eventualities. For these eventualities scarcely ever arise precisely in the way calculated upon; and even when they do arise, there is generally something to control the judgment in the 'how' and 'when,' so that the same eventuality does not necessarily lead up to the same conclusion. The prudent statesman will therefore find his strength in coming to a decision on no more than one step, and that the one which the immediate occasion demands, waiting to see the effect produced for his guidance in deciding what step to take next. . . . Should Austria prove victorious, then I do not see how Prussia should be thereby forced into the background in Germany. Prussia never had any Italian possessions, and has not for the last forty years followed the perverse policy which has brought that country into its present wretched state. By her state of preparation, Prussia will have kept France in check, and set a brilliant example by the prompt declaration of her readiness, if the necessity arose, to fulfil her duty to a brother state without flinching. Should Austria come to grief in the campaign, strong as she is in her military position, this can scarcely result in a general *déroute*, and Prussia and Germany, if they felt politically justified in such a step, would always have time to take part in the war with advantage, before France could have so cleared her hands of the Austrians that she could launch all her forces against Germany."

When telling Stockmar of this correspondence, and of the enquiry, through Perponcher, what the British Government intended to do, the Prince adds:—

"All the secret stipulations in the world with this Court or that are not to be compared with the security which is given by a frank understanding with your own people and with public opinion. This, moreover, gives confidence to the public opinion of other countries when it is in union with your own, and inspires awe when it is at variance with it."

Fluctuations between peace and war continued throughout the spring, and the Prince, always giving prime

attention to foreign affairs, and with the excitement of the Reform Bill on his hands, called himself fearfully overworked. Moreover, he was obliged to consider of the preparations for the Exhibition of 1862 —that Exhibition which he was never to see.

He made time, however, for his letters to his daughter, and very wise and sometimes amusing ones they were—

"You are now eighteen years old, and you will hold your own against many a buffet in life; still, you will encounter many for which you were not prepared, and which you would fain have been spared. You must arm yourself against these, like Austria against the chances of war, otherwise you will break down, and drop into a sickly state, which would be disastrous to yourself, and inflict a frightful burden upon poor Fritz for life; besides which, it would unfit you for fulfilling all the duties of your station. . . . I will get Alice to read to me the article about Freemasons. It is not likely to contain the whole secret. The circumstance which provokes you only into finding fault with the Order, viz., that husbands dare not communicate the secret of it to their wives, is just one of its best. To be able to be silent is one of the chief virtues of the husband; then the test which puts him in opposition to that being towards whom he constantly shows the greatest weakness is the hardest of all, and therefore the most compendious of virtues; and the wife should not only rejoice to see him capable of withstanding such a test, but should take occasion to vie with him in virtue by taming the curiosity she inherits from mother Eve. If the subject of the secret be nothing more important than an apron, then every chance is given to virtue on both sides, without disturbing the confidence of marriage, which should be complete."

Great was the anxiety during the uncertainties which preceded the outbreak of war in Italy.

"The telegraph drives one almost mad," wrote the Prince; "two to three an hour is the usual number, and they almost always contradict one another."

Again :—

"I can remember no period of equal confusion and danger. The ill-starred telegraph speaks incessantly from all quarters of the globe, and from every quarter a different language (I mean, to a different purport). Suspicion, hatred, pride, cunning, intrigue, covetousness, dissimulation, dictate the despatches, and in this state of things we cast about to find a basis on which peace may be secured. At home, we are now on the verge of a dissolution of Parliament, which is to take place on Tuesday. Parties are broken up, and much embittered against each other; and with things in this state we are to find a sure basis for a Reform Bill which will satisfy the democrats without driving monarchy and aristocracy to the wall. Also a pretty business!"

The general election, caused by the introduction of the Derby Bill for an extended franchise, was followed by the resignation of the Conservative Ministry, and the return of the Liberals to power under Lord Palmerston.

While this crisis was passing at home, Austria had actually begun the war against Sardinia and France, and in very short space was beaten in four great battles; but with such loss to the French armies, that the Emperor finding England, even under the Liberals, resolved not to stir in his support, broke off the contest, leaving half complete the liberation he had pledged himself to effect, and Victor Emmanuel, as it were, in the lurch. It was a disappointment in England, and did not inspire respect or confidence in Napoleon III.; but the Queen and Prince strengthened the Liberals in the resolution to have nothing to do, one way or the other, with the Congress of Villa Franca.

CHAPTER XI.

LAST SCENES.

1860-61.

The Prince's religious views—His influence on the English people—Disappointments of his life—The annexation of Savoy—A letter to Stockmar—The Star of India—The national defences—A carriage accident—Betrothal of the Princess Alice—The last Christmas—Death of Frederick William—Twenty-first anniversary of the royal marriage—Letter to the King of Prussia—Death of the Duchess of Kent—Worries and duties—Visit to Ireland and Wales—Deaths in the family of Portugal—Last letter to Stockmar—Symptoms of fever—Memorandum on the *Trent* affair—Progress of the Prince's last illness—Death and burial—Conclusion.

We have reached the closing events of the life cut off on the threshold of middle age, a life which has left its mark. There can be no doubt that a strong influence for good was exercised on the country. The Prince was a fervently religious man, always acting on principle, though his actual creed seems to have been curiously undefined, so far as can be judged from the conversations with him recorded by Bishop Wilberforce, to whom he seems to have drawn nearer as years gave the Bishop

time to live down the earlier suspicions of ambition and time-serving. The last conversation they had is thus recorded by Bishop Woodford from the lips of Wilberforce :—

"The Bishop had been preaching in the private chapel at Windsor, upon the subject of our Lord's Intercession in Heaven, His presenting the prayers of His people to the Father, and enforcing them by the presence of His human Body, still bearing the mark of the wounds of His Passion. The Prince had sent a message inviting the Bishop to walk with him in the afternoon, and turned the conversation to the sermon of the morning, saying that it had suggested to him an entirely new view of the subject, that he must not be supposed to mean that he accepted it, but that he should give it his most serious reflection; adding: 'Now, at any rate, I understand why the Church of England is so careful to conclude every prayer with such words as 'through Jesus Christ, our Lord.'"

It seems strange that twenty years of English church-going should not have made this doctrine evident to him before. But the German temper and training results in devotion without definite dogma, and there is no doubt that his tendencies, as well as his friends, notably Baron Bunsen and Dean Stanley, were of the "Broad" description, disliking definite doctrine as the parent of discussion and narrowness, and viewing the Church as one of the State departments, so that Churchmen could not but distrust him.

Yet the genuine piety, respect and reverence for religion, and absolute truth, purity, self-denial and nobleness of his life, had a great effect for good on the nation. His philanthropy, too, did much, and gave the impulse to

much more exertion for the relief of the distressed and amelioration of evils. There can be little doubt, either, that his attempts in the cause of recreation have done much to promote innocent amusement among our people, and to dispel the puritanism that left no choice between dulness and dissipation. His influence on art, though his taste was imperfect, was beneficial from the stimulus given by his interest. Our defences, and the vigour of an army, likewise owe much to him; but though at home his doings and benefits were often far too grudgingly accepted, yet in his foreign policy he was in his special field, and his vigilance was extremely valuable in maintaining to the utmost our national honour and probity, and in taking care that the English name should be alike trusted and feared. He knew how to put aside personal dislikes and national predilections, and while guarding our honour both in peace and war, his unseen hand contributed not a little to the glories of the reign.

Yet his was a worn and disappointed life. The sovereigns whom he had tried to admire, nay, who had gained his affection, each and all failed, and excited that burning sense of indignation at injustice and grasping ambition which was a part of his nature. Louis Philippe, Napoleon III., and Frederick William of Prussia, all in turn had shocked his sense of right, truth, and justice. Nor had he at home been able to surmount the perpetual prejudice against himself and his doings; he was always

the scapegoat of everything unpopular, and where his good sense and moderation really prevailed, he never had the credit. He did indeed win the love and confidence of those in close contact with him, but they were necessarily only a few, and the outside world always felt him to be a foreigner, and resented his interference. Each outburst of suspicion was a fresh wound, borne manfully and in silence, but blunting his hopes, though not his activity.

He was too self-restrained to be understood, and never showed himself genial enough to win the kind of popularity acquired by visible warmth. In fact, there was scarcely common ground enough between him and John Bull for full success, and though his real usefulness and admirable speeches commanded sympathy at the moment, it always died away again. His studied neutrality was against him. Liberals thought him Conservative, Conservatives Liberal; and though he used scrupulous courtesy, and won respect and confidence from each ministry, it is plain that he personally acted most happily and harmoniously with Conservatives. His sympathies, though never with unjust oppression and autocracy, became more and more against democratic movements, and the progress of these grieved and alarmed him for the future.

Altogether, while happy as a man must be whose home is perfectly affectionate and full of unselfish devotion, and whose conscience is clear, he must have felt

that his career was a trying one, involving much undeserved obloquy and vexation.

The summer's visit to Balmoral was made doubly delightful by a short stay of the "dear Prussian children," as the Prince calls them in a letter to Baron Stockmar. The Baron had grown so aged that he seldom exerted himself to write, though the news of the Prince's having had a sharp gastric attack made him so uneasy that he sent a long letter of counsel on care of health, and the difficulty of proper precautions in such a position. Indeed, even in what should have been holiday time, the Prince says, "I am overwhelmed with papers, and can scarcely wade through them." Matters were tranquil at home, but the real grievances of Italy, coupled with the unjustifiable conduct of France, rendered foreign affairs very unsatisfactory, and English sympathy had to be held back from espousing the Italian cause. "I am tired to death with work, vexation and worry," again says the Prince, early in 1861. Among causes of depression, one of the chief was disappointment in the French Emperor, after all his professions and apparent frankness at the time of the Crimean war. And now, when he had talked of making war "for an idea" in Italy, the idea was proved to be the annexation of Savoy, the old hereditary possession of the Sardinian kings, as the price of his assistance, and of his consent to the consolidation

of a kingdom of Italy. Well might the Queen write to Lord John Russell: "As to the claim itself, it is wanting in all excuse, however ingenious the Emperor may be." In spite, however, of indignation, interference was impossible, and Savoy was unwillingly yielded to France, which had always coveted it; but the acquisition was a death-blow to all respect for the Emperor.

"I found his Royal Highness in very low spirits," says Vizthum, after dining at Buckingham Palace on May 1st. "Speaking of the impression I had recently formed in Paris, I threw out the conjecture that peace would not be disturbed till next spring."

The Prince shared the hope, but remarked, not without bitterness:—

"By that time the Piedmontese will have been able to gain a sufficiently strong footing in Italy to venture an attack on Venetia. By that time also the Franco-Danish Alliance will have ripened, the object of which is to occupy a portion of the German part of Holstein. Then, as anyone can foresee, will come the time for Napoleon to deal his premeditated blow against the Rhine. England will be obliged to look on. We shall be kept in check in the south by the Italian sympathies of our ministers, and in the north by the London Treaty of 1852, which guarantees the integrity of the kingdom of Denmark. Even the French Treaty of commerce will be perverted into a means of keeping down the warlike spirit of the nation. Our merchants and manufacturers are promising themselves mountains of gold out of it. As to the value of patriotism and loyalty nowadays, Bright gave us lately a pretty edifying illustration on the occasion of the Savoy affair."

The predictions, though not immediately fulfilled, did indeed show the remarkable foresight of the Prince.

The wedding day of the Queen and Prince had come round, and the letter written on it to Stockmar by both is deeply touching.

"I cannot let this day come to a close without sending you a line. It is twenty years to-day since our troth-plight took place in St. James's. I see you still standing in the pew not far from the chancel, as the negociator of the marriage treaty, when I made my entry into the chapel between papa and Ernest. We have gone through much since then, and *tried hard* after much that is *good;* if we have not always succeeded, the will at least was good, and we cannot be sufficiently grateful to heaven for many a victory and many a success; you have been to me a true friend and wise counsellor, and if now we are separated by distance, and old age and feeble health do not allow you to lend the same active aid as in days of yore, we are still united in feeling and in spirit, and shall continue the same as long as our earthly garment shall hang together. We are quite well; to-morrow we make *our* way to town. The children are to give me a surprise forthwith, which is to remain a profound secret to me till half-past six. All good be with you.

"ALBERT."

"One little word I must add on this blessed day. Words cannot express my gratitude or my happiness. I wish I could think *I had made* one as happy as he has made me. But this is not for want of *love and devotion.* Few possess so much. My kindest wishes to you too.

"VICTORIA."

The displeasure of England at the grasping of Savoy irritated the French, but the Emperor was too wise to risk a quarrel, and he contrived to pacify the other Powers for the present, though the Prince Consort says:—

Now, however, the weak and distracted state of Europe, and of Germany in particular, which is simply due to the fact that the Napoleonic policy has been allowed full swing, will be put forward by

many as imposing it upon England as a duty not to engage in any Continental struggle with France, as this would be to turn round upon an approved ally. In Germany the state of things must be deplorable: Austria in a state of decomposition, and Prussia without energetic guidance and force of conviction, '*Benjamin est sans force et Juda sans vertu*,' as they say in *Athalie*."

The matters connected with art and literature at home were a rest—in the sense of change of occupation—to the Prince. He was especially delighted with the "Idylls of the King," begged Tennyson to write his name in the book, and marked passages of it for his eldest daughter to illustrate. Another subject taking more consideration than could have been expected was the new Order of Merit for services in India. He wished to call it "The Eastern Star," with the motto, "Glory to God, peace on earth, good will to men." But this suggestion was answered by an explanation from Lord Canning that Eastern was a term of hostility and reproach among the Hindoos. There were such objections to each title proposed that the Prince declared it ought to borrow the name and sign of a house at Teblitz, the Golden Impossibility, with men rowing against a rock. Finally the "Star of India" was decided on, with the motto "Heaven's Light our Guide."

"We have no leisure to be sick," said one of the Prince's letters, but there were often slight ailments during the trying cold wet spring and summer of 1860.

The Balmoral holiday, as usual, was most refreshing; and in Scotland, as already in England, the grand muster of volunteers was most gratifying. National defence was always a matter of great anxiety with the Prince, and he was urgently pressing on the Admiralty the system of training boys for the Royal Navy, as well as watching anxiously the progress of the Bill for the fortification of our harbours. No man understood better than he that the way to secure peace is to be prepared for war, but whatever the pressure on his mind he was always bright and kind to those about him. "It's very pleasant to walk with a person who is always content," was the observation of one of his servants. The death of his much-loved stepmother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, came to sadden the expedition to Germany, and made the arrival at Coburg sorrowful, although there awaited them the joy of meeting their daughter with her husband and little son.

During their stay Prince Albert met with a accident that had nearly been serious. He was driving alone in a carriage with four horses, when on some alarm they dashed off at a gallop. He sat still until they came to a crossing of a railway, where a waggon was waiting in the road to have the bar in front removed. Then, seeing a collision inevitable, he jumped out, not escaping cuts and bruises, but able to go to the help of the coachman, who was seriously hurt. One of the horses was

killed, and the other three came headlong into the town, where Colonel Ponsonby and a doctor hurried off with a carriage to bring assistance. The Prince insisted on the doctor's attending only to the coachman, and sent Colonel Ponsonby to tell the Queen what had happened. His face, elbows, and one knee had been cut, and he had to keep his room for a couple of days, but there were no worse consequences, and his old friend Baron Stockmar had the satisfaction of attending him, and afterwards of receiving the Queen and Princess Alice in his own house.

During this journey the preliminaries of Princess Alice's marriage with Prince Louis of Hesse were under consideration, and a visit to England was proposed to enable the young people to become acquainted with one another. "The whole stay at Coburg has done my heart much good," wrote the Prince Consort to his daughter after they had parted at Aix la Chapelle.

In memory of her husband's preservation the Queen founded at her own private expense an institution called the Victoria Stift at Coburg, for aiding deserving young men and women in the lower ranks in obtaining a livelihood.

The two young sons, the Prince of Wales and Prince Alfred, were welcomed at home, the one from America, the other from the Cape, where each had been received with enthusiasm. Prince Louis of Hesse likewise

arrived for his betrothal, and the party was complete that spent the Prince's last Christmas at Windsor. Only one member of the family was lacking, and here are her father's Christmas greetings to her:—

"Again we have missed you greatly at our Christmas table.

"Our dearest heads were counted o'er
A dearest one is here no more!"

"Oh, if you with Fritz and the children were only with us! Louis was an accession. He is a very dear good fellow, who pleases us better and better daily. In my abstraction I call him Fritz. Your Fritz must not take it amiss, for it is only the personification of a beloved, newly-bestowed, full-grown son. . . . Prejudice walking to and fro in flesh and blood is my horror, and alas! a phenomenon so common, and people plume themselves so much on their prejudices as signs of decision of character and greatness of mind, nay, of true patriotism, and all the while they are simply the product of narrowness of intellect, and narrowness of heart."

At that very time, Frederick William was ending a life always amiable and religious, but weak and vacillating, and latterly incapable. His brother, William, destined to raise the country to a far more important position than it had yet occupied, had been in fact ruler for two years, but could not take the decisive part of exercising the power of the actual sovereign.

The answer of Prince Albert to his daughter's description of the impression made upon her by the death and the sight of the body was:—

"The more frequently you look upon the corpse, the stronger will be your conviction that yonder husk is not the *man*, yet that it is scarcely conceivable how it can have been. In seeing and observing

the approach of death as you have been called upon to do, you have become older in experience than myself. I have never seen anyone die."

The Prince rejoiced over the conduct of his daughter during the trying scenes in which she was engaged.

Soon after came February 10th, when, as he said, "his wedding came of age." Knowing as we do that it was the last kept together in this world, the utterances of the day are the more touching. To the Duchess of Kent, the husband writes — "We have faithfully kept our pledge for better and for worse, and can only thank God that He has conceded so much happiness to us. May He have us in His keeping for the days to come." To Stockmar the words are—"How many a storm has swept over it (the marriage), and yet it continues green and fresh, and throws out vigorous roots, from which I can with gratitude acknowledge that much good will yet be engendered for this world! It is now with these twenty-one years, as with the four score years of the Bible, if they have been precious (*köstlich*, in Luther's version) they have also been labour and toil." The Queen's words to her uncle are:—

"On Sunday we celebrated, with feelings of deep gratitude and love, the twenty-first anniversary of our blessed marriage, a day which has brought to us, and, I may say, to the world at large, such incalculable blessings. Very few can say with me that their husband at the end of twenty-one years is not only full of the friendship, kindness, and affection which a truly happy marriage brings with it, but of the same tender love as in the first days of our marriage."

There was already some failing in strength on the Prince's part. His sufferings from toothache, and the weakening effect of pain and sleeplessness, indicated that "labour and toil" had strained his nerves, and tried a constitution never robust; and there was no possibility of rest from the cares and toil of public life, or the private and semi-private questions that had accumulated upon him.

The revolution in the Kingdom of Naples, and the flight of the king, gave much cause for anxiety, though England abstained from any share in the matter; and there was much restlessness in Germany, which the Prince always felt deeply, both as concerning his father-land, and as affecting the future of his daughters:—

"My hope," he wrote to the new king of Prussia, "like that of most German patriots, rests on you. . . . It rests on you as you have succeeded to the throne without being entangled or fettered by the miserable policy of reaction, to which indeed you were often yourself a victim, and because your known loyalty of character makes you regarded by the Germans as the type of their chief saying, "*Ein Wort, ein Mann.*" With the national feelings once fairly roused through reliance on a Prince who is prepared to take the lead, the German people will suffice for itself, and needs to fear neither Italians, French, Hungarians nor Poles; nay, it will even become a power which its neighbours, the *Times* included, will regard with respect."

A most true prediction, though the Prince did not live to see it realised. A grief touching him nearly was at hand, in the illness and death of the Duchess of Kent, with whom he had been on the most filial and affectionate

terms, and whose death was the beginning of sorrows to her most loving daughter.

"Dear Albert is dreadfully overcome; well he may be, for she adored him," says the Queen. And, again, "He was so tender and kind, so pained to have to ask me distressing questions, but spared me so much."

The personal grief was great, and the endeavour to support the Queen, and shield her from unnecessary trouble and distraction, as well as the answering endless condolences, were no slight additions to the work of one already almost overtasked. A brief visit from the Crown Princess was a great help and comfort, but a month later the Prince tells Stockmar that the Queen, though well,

"is terribly nervous, and the children are a disturbance to her. You may conceive it was and is no easy task for me to comfort and support her, and to keep others at a distance, and yet at the same time not to throw away the opportunity which a time like the present affords of binding the family together in a closer bond of unity.

"By business I am well nigh overwhelmed, as I do my utmost to save Victoria all trouble, while at the same time I am mama's sole executor. As Sir G. Cowper died just fourteen days before mama, and was not able to hand over her complicated affairs to anyone, I am wholly without advice or assistance, and have to puzzle out everything bit by bit, and to hunt up whatever is necessary for their comprehension. To add to which, Lady Phipps had a nervous seizure the day after mama's death, and Sir Charles has not been able to leave her side since, and is detained in London powerless to help me."

To add to all this harass, the *Times* thought proper to imply that the influence of the Government as to the

liberation of Italy was impeded by the predilections of the Court, meaning, of course, the Prince, and he could not choose but be disappointed to find that all these years had not so established confidence in him as to spare him from such insinuations.

Arrangements for the studies of the Prince of Wales at Cambridge had to be made, and though the Queen recovered spirits enough for the Court ceremonies in London during the Season, there was a weight on everything, and the heat of the summer was unusual and oppressive. However, at Osborne there was the delight of a visit from the Prussian children and grandchildren, and later of numerous royal visitors: the King of Sweden, and the Archduke Maximilian, with his Archduchess Charlotte.

An expedition to Ireland and Wales followed, and there was real refreshment in the sojourn in the Highlands, where the excursions to fine scenery hitherto unexplored greatly refreshed both the Queen and Prince, though the attendants on the latter observed that he was more easily fatigued when out shooting or deer-stalking than before. Anxieties were very heavy on account of the War of Secession in America, and the necessity of showing impartiality on the part of Government without undue restraint on the people.

The Court returned to Windsor on October 23rd to receive a great number of guests; but there was

still a heavy sense of grief. The death of Sir James Graham, with whom there had been much intercourse, was a blow. Little Prince Leopold was in delicate health, and the Crown Princess was very unwell from a cold caught at the coronation of her father-in-law at Konigsberg; and just then came tidings of an outbreak of typhoid fever in the royal family at Lisbon. The father of this family was Ferdinand of Coburg, first cousin to both Queen and Prince, and the young king and his brothers had visited England several times, and were regarded with warm affection. Two of the brothers, the Dukes of Oporto and Beja, had been at the Prussian coronation, and came to Windsor on their way home on November 7th, the very day after news had been there received that their brother Ferdinand had died of the fever, and that the King himself was in a dangerous state, which was aggravated by the recent loss of his young wife, Queen Stephanie. They went on their way, but before they reached Lisbon the young King Pedro was dead, and the Duke of Beja soon after sickened and died before the end of the year.

The grief was deeply felt in England. The Queen's diary says of the King :—

"Highly gifted and most able, pure, virtuous, excellent, hard-working to a degree, and only devoted to duty, he was one in a thousand. My Albert was very fond of him, loved him as a son (as I did too), while he had unbounded confidence in Albert, and was worthy of him."

To his daughter the Prince writes:—

"I cannot realise the fact of dear Pedro being snatched from this earth, and Louis in his place. What a terrible blow for the unhappy country and for poor Ferdinand! With the good Pedro it is well. What with the wounds which the loss of his Stephanie left in his heart, the mournful cast of thought which was peculiar to his nature, and the great conscientiousness which made him feel so deeply everything that affected his own duty and the welfare of his country, he would never have been entirely happy here below, and now he is united to the angel who went before him; but he was qualified to effect infinite good for a degraded country and people, and also to uphold with integrity the monarchial principle, and to strengthen the faith in its blessings which is unfortunately so frequently shaken to its foundation by those who are its representatives."

To Baron Stockmar the Prince wrote in the same strain, adding in reference to other troubles of a more private nature, "I am fearfully in want of a true friend and counsellor, and that *you* are the friend and counsellor I want you will readily understand."

This sentence is the more affecting, because this was the last letter that Prince Albert ever wrote to the friend and adviser of his entire public life. The death of King Pedro weighed on his spirits, and to add to the strain came the beginning of the fatal illness of Sir Edward Bowater, who had been sent in charge of the little Prince Leopold to Cannes. Business of all kinds told upon a state of mind and body unfit to cope with harassment, though nothing would induce him to spare himself.

On November 22nd, he went to inspect the buildings of the new Staff College at Sandhurst, on a miserable

day of pouring rain, when he was thoroughly chilled and tired out; and the sleeplessness which always ensued on extra excitement, together with rheumatic pains, prevented any repair of forces. Still, he went out shooting the next day, for the last time, and on the next he felt himself compelled to take a hurried journey to Cambridge for one night, to see his eldest son. He came back, suffering from pain in the back and legs—"*recht elend*," as he noted in his diary. His old valet repeated, "Living here will kill your Royal Highness. You must leave Windsor and go to Germany to recover strength."

Unfortunately the physician who had attended him and knew his constitution, Dr. Baily, had been killed in a railway accident a few months previously, and he himself was unable to sleep or eat, and in the strange, listless, indifferent condition that is often one of the first symptoms of typhoid fever. None of the immediate family had any experience of serious illness, so that no alarm was taken.

On the 29th, the Prince made the last entry in his Journal, before attending an inspection of the Eton College Volunteers. He was also considering and advising on the affair of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, envoys from the Southern States, who had been captured on board the English steamer *Trent*, by the captain of a Northern man-of-war. It was one of those questions which might have led to a serious misunderstanding

between the Governments, but is now chiefly interesting in that it called forth the last memorandum written by him for the assistance of the Cabinet. He wrote it between seven and eight on the morning of December 1st, and as he gave it to the Queen said in his native tongue—"I am so weak, I could hardly hold the pen." The weakness may be traced in his handwriting, yet the suggestions were so good and dignified that Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell were most grateful for them. They guarded the honour of the country, yet giving the Americans no reason to complain of a dictatorial or menacing spirit.

This was on the Sunday morning, and the Prince kept up all day, going to church, kneeling and standing there as usual, and joining the family at their meals though unable to eat, but still talking and telling anecdotes. Two or three days passed in the same manner, during one of which he saw two gentlemen who had been on a message of condolence to Lisbon, and who told him all the details of King Pedro's death. He said to one of them that he thought his own illness likely to turn to fever, and if so, he should scarcely live through it. He had long before told the Queen—"I am sure, if I had a severe illness, I should give up at once, I should not struggle for life. I have no tenacity of life." He had also said to her—"I do not cling to life; you do, but I set no store by it. If I knew that those I love

were well cared for, I should be quite ready to die to-morrow."

On the 3rd or 4th, he desired Princess Alice to write that he could not recover, to her sister at Berlin, and the next day begged to know whether she had done so, yet he never spoke of his forebodings to her mother.

When, on December 6th, the doctors had no remaining doubt of the nature of the illness, they refrained from declaring it to him, considering him to have a horror of fever. But from all the minute accounts preserved, it seems likely that he perceived the nature of the case, though with his constant habit of silence and consideration for others, he held his peace until Dr. Jenner pronounced the sickness to be fever, dating from the drive to Sandhurst on November 22nd, and likely to take its course for a month. The fever did not run very high, and he was daily moved into an adjoining room where was a beautiful picture of the Madonna on china, upon which he liked to gaze. "It helps me through half the day," he said. The Queen and Princess Alice read to him, chiefly Scott's novels, the familiar sound of which suited the weary ear better than newer books. There was a wistful tenderness in his manner towards the Queen, when he held her hand, and stroked her face, calling her *Gutes Weibchen*, or *Armes Weibchen*, and trying to gather his thoughts. Once he pressed the sending a message to the Duke of Nemours, that

in case of an American war with England, the French Princes ought to leave the Northern army in which they were serving. There was latterly a tendency to wander, but pressing alarm did not begin till December 13th, when difficulty of breathing was thought a symptom of congestion of the lungs.

The Prince of Wales was sent for by Princess Alice on her own responsibility, and arrived at 3 A.M., but after this there was a decided rally, which made the morning so hopeful that cheering telegrams were sent to the Crown Princess and the King of Portugal. But a dusky tint came over the face, and there were those gestures of arranging the hair that so often are the prelude to departure. The breathing became more quick and laboured, hope faded away, and with wife and children kneeling round, the pure and true spirit passed away at 10.45 A.M. on December 14th, 1861. The shock was almost like that caused by a sudden death. The Queen was absolutely stunned, and Princess Alice had to think and act for her. Lord Palmerston, on being informed by the Duke of Cambridge, fainted away several times, and the whole court and country seemed to be paralyzed.

All who saw the corpse spoke of its wonderful beauty, and the glorified look that rested on those fine features, which no evil had ever stained. On December 23rd the state funeral took place in St.

George's Chapel, but the vault there was only a temporary resting-place. A mausoleum was erected at Frogmore, whither the remains were the next year removed, and where tender affection has never ceased to dwell on that fair memory. Like Tennyson's "Arthur," the Prince Consort was a selfless man, and England has come to know and mourn for her loss.

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